

**Protection and Security in a Technologically
Advanced Society: Children and Young People's
Perspectives**

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Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained within this thesis has been submitted for any other degree at any other university. The contents found herein have been composed by the candidate, Kerry Hannigan.



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Abstract

The continuous advancement of new technology, specifically in the area of internet technology, has led to an increase in concerns surrounding children and young people's safety when online. The following thesis describes a study of protection and security on the internet from the perspective of children and young people and contributes and expands on the findings of my Masters Dissertation which examined parents' perceptions of children at risk on the internet. The research focuses on young people's perspectives about what risks they face and what would keep them safe and is set within literature on child sex abusers and internet grooming.

The thesis is based on an online survey which gathered information about the behaviour and opinions of 859 children and young people living in Scotland. Findings were separated into four main topics: children and young people's behaviour on the internet, children and young people's perception of strangers both online and offline, children and young people's opinion of education on internet safety and children and young people's opinion of the government's role in relation to their safety online. Respondents' stated that they wanted to be protected when on the internet (whilst acknowledging their own responsibility when online), either by the government or through those responsible for the content of the internet. They also provided several suggestions on how schools and the government can do more to listen to their voices and improve internet safety education. There were a number of children and young people who reported that they disclosed personal information over the internet (their own and that of their friends and family) and that they were willing to meet people in the real environment whom they had been communicating with online: many respondents' viewed internet 'strangers' as different from 'strangers' in the real environment.

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Wood *et al.*'s (1976) development of the concept of scaffolding, which has been developed in an educational rather than criminological context, were identified as offering some promise for explaining the behaviour of both the victims and the offender as other theories of sexual offending (either specific theories or explanations developed from general theories) are incapable of fully providing an explanation that will encompass grooming in general and online grooming in particular. It is argued that if these theories are applied to internet safety education they have the potential to empower children and young people and make grooming tactics and approaches less effective.

The findings also indicated that more child and young people-oriented protection measures may be needed. Perceptions of protection and security on the internet were wide ranging but respondents were keen to provide possible solutions and examples of how to improve their safety when online. This would suggest that communicating with children and young people when developing policy, legislation, research and educational materials is the way forward if we wish to improve their safety and eliminate or reduce the dangers they face when using the internet.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores protection and security in the online environment, focusing on children and young people's perspectives and is set in the context of literature on internet grooming. It is based on an online survey containing both open and closed questions which examined the behaviour and opinions of children and young people in Scotland (10-17 years). This chapter introduces the background context and relevance of the study as well as providing an overview of subsequent chapters to aid the reader in navigating the thesis.

Background and rationale

As part of my undergraduate degree at Perth College UHI I enrolled on a social psychology module. This module sparked my interest and curiosity in interpersonal relationships and impression formation. Throughout the module I was introduced to topics such as conformity, obedience, impression formation and group dynamics. I completed this module with a heightened awareness of how quickly people formed impressions of others and how easily people can be influenced and manipulated by others.

At the same time as completing this module I was living at home with my partner, who is a computer programmer, and my daughter who was eleven years old at the time and slowly discovering the internet. This combination directed my curiosity towards the online environment. I quickly became interested in how interpersonal relationships worked when using the internet to communicate.

This led to my undergraduate dissertation which was focused on impression formation online. The results of this study highlighted that people are just as quick to form

impressions of others online as they are offline, despite the lack of visual stimuli available in the online environment. At the same time my daughter was getting ready to start secondary school and was desperate for me to allow her to have a social network account. Because of the job my partner had I was completely aware of the potential dangers my daughter could face when using the internet and was therefore quick to refuse her request. What I did learn, however, was that a large number of her friends already had accounts.

I therefore decided to combine the knowledge I had gained from my honours dissertation and the many request from my daughter to produce the rationale for my master's dissertation which examined parents' perceptions of the risks faced by children when using the internet. What I found surprised me. The majority of parents claimed to be unaware of any prevention and protection measures they could put in place to protect their children when using the internet and only associated the internet with computers and laptops: they did not take into consideration any other devices. In addition, they claimed to know little about the online environment and placed their trust in their children to be responsible and keep safe. This is despite parents claiming that they were constantly worried about child sex abusers or dangerous adults attempting to communicate with their children when they are online (with some parents providing examples of when this may have occurred).

The growing use of internet technology by young people and the mobile nature of this technology, along with parent's claims that they were unaware of prevention and protection measures, raised several questions in my mind regarding the safety of young people when using the internet. Taking into consideration parents' reliance on their children to be responsible, and keep safe on the internet, along with parents' fear of child sex abusers attempting to communicate with their children, I was left with a void

in my knowledge between what parents claimed, what government bodies claimed and how young people felt about the dangers associated with the internet.

This thesis therefore follows on from my master's dissertation research and focuses on children and young people's perspectives of protection and security when using the internet. Whilst there are many strands to internet use such as education, entertainment, communication, cyberbullying and pornography, this thesis is based on the main issues that emerged from my master's dissertation and was a concern of my own as a parent of a soon to be teenage daughter.

The grooming and sexual abuse of children and young people is an international problem as it has no geographical boundaries, which makes it a difficult area in which to develop legislation and preventative measures. It is a process which involves befriending children and young people with initial communication that seems harmless and innocent but which has harmful intent (Webster *et al.* 2012).

Research aim and question

The main aim of this research was to gain a greater understanding of children and young people's thoughts and opinions on protection and security when using the internet. This would allow the development of a more detailed understanding of the behaviour of children and young people when on the internet and how this relates to risks of grooming. Such knowledge could provide practitioners and policy makers with an evidence-based account of how internet related technology is being used by children and young people. In addition this knowledge could also provide an evidence-based account of how to develop and approach internet safety teaching in schools in Scotland, especially in relation to dangerous adults. Through the analysis of the literature covered in Chapters One, Two and Three the following research question was developed:

What are children and young peoples' views about the risks they face on the internet and how can they be used to help protect them from being groomed by dangerous adults?

Thesis structure

Chapter One provides an introduction to the context and rationale for the research and discusses one of the key dangers associated with children, young people and the internet; the risk of communication with and being groomed by child sex abusers. This is followed by an introduction to some of the current safety measures in place to protect children and young people on the internet. Included in the thesis are measures put in place by bodies such as the Internet Watch Foundation and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.

Background literature and legislation relating to child sex abusers is discussed in Chapter Two. It begins by giving a discussion on offender theories and typologies in relation to child sex offenders. The chapter discusses a selection of theories and typologies under three main sections. The first section provides an account of theories in relation to child sex abusers and the second section is a discussion on typologies of sex offenders. This is followed by an explanation of the grooming process which can be applied to both the online environment and the everyday outside environment before moving on to more specific details relating to the online environment. Included in the explanations is an account of the cyclical nature of the grooming process for both the online and offline environments. The different stages of the grooming cycle highlighted by Gillespie (2008) are discussed for the offline environment before going on to discuss O'Connell's (2004) explanation of how the online environment can make the grooming process easier and quicker as highlighted in her adaptation of the

grooming cycle. The chapter then moves on to discuss Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development which is the main theory identified for discussing the literature and findings in this thesis. The final section discusses current UK and EU legislation in relation to internet grooming. As well as indicating the different legislation available the chapter also discusses the difficulties in producing legislation which relates to internet grooming.

The involvement of children and young people as participants in research is discussed in Chapter Three. The first section is a general discussion on why children and young people should be and are capable of being involved in social research. This is achieved by looking at previous literature on the topic. The second section discusses previous methodologies which have been implemented by researchers studying children and young people's online behaviour. This chapter also discusses the methodology of the present study. It presents the research aims, overarching research question and associated sub-questions and gives a reflective and theoretical account of the chosen methods. This is followed by a detailed account of the methods used and procedures followed during the study, including the feedback gained from a pilot study. The study involved the implementation of an online survey which was conducted in primary and secondary schools across Scotland using the procedures already in place within the schools. As it was a vulnerable group who were participating in this study extra consideration was required in order to ensure the safety, confidentiality and anonymity of all gatekeepers and respondents. Ethical considerations were therefore carefully considered throughout all stages of the study. Data analysis is also discussed in this chapter which involved analysing the large amount of both qualitative and quantitative data generated.

In Chapters Four to Seven the findings of the study are presented and discussed in relation to the information provided in the first four chapters. Chapter Four looks at the findings which relate to children, young people and their online behaviour. This chapter discusses issues such as: respondents access to the internet; whether or not they feel they need to be kept safe on the internet; their disclosure of personal information; and whether or not they feel confident they would know what to do should they experience something uncomfortable. Chapter Five presents the findings which relate to children, young people and strangers. This chapter examines respondents' opinions on whether or not they believe there to be a difference between strangers in the outside environment and strangers in the online environment. It also looks at how safe from harm they feel with friends, family, strangers, and friends they have never met before when on the internet. Chapter Six looks at the findings which relate to children, young people and education. This chapter discusses respondents' opinions of the safety information they receive or do not receive at school and discusses whether there is anything they would like to see being done in schools to teach internet safety to children and young people. Finally, Chapter Seven looks at the findings which relate to children, young people and the government. Respondents' opinions on whether or not they feel the government is doing enough to listen to the voices of young people and suggestions on what they would like the government to do in order to listen more are discussed in this chapter. In addition, respondents' knowledge of the safety measures currently in place is also discussed.

Chapter Eight is an overall discussion of all the findings from Chapters Four to Seven. Each of the six individual questions presented in Chapter Three are addressed and a response provided which incorporates the findings from the present study with the literature discussed in Chapters One to Three. The discussion then incorporates the

findings from the previous four chapters and applies them to the overarching research question, providing an account of how the data collected from the study helps to address this question and the possible implications of the findings from the present study. Chapter Eight then leads on to the conclusion, a closing summary of the thesis as well as discussing the limitations of the study and the potential for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INTERNET: DANGER AND PROTECTION

This chapter is an introduction to the context and rationale for this research. General literature on the topic of children, young people and the internet will be discussed before moving on to the two main sections of this chapter. The first section is a discussion of one of the dangers and risks associated with children, young people and the internet; child sex abusers. There are numerous dangers associated with the internet such as cyberbullying and child pornography, however, child sex abusers is believed by many researchers (such as O'Connell, 2004, Gillespie, 2008, Ost 2009, and Martellozzo, 2012) to be a key issue which needs to be addressed. The second section is a discussion of some of the current bodies which are in place to protect children and young people when using the internet. All bodies cannot be discussed as these are continuously changing, advancing and developing.

Children, young people and the internet

Ofcom and the UK Council for Child Internet Safety aimed to map trends in children and young people's ability to use, understand and create media and communication as well as to identify their use of alternative media devices (Ofcom, 2011). Their study found that there was a growth in the use of alternative devices by children and young people when accessing the internet (mobile phones, games consoles, iPods etc.), the use of social networking sites is still on the increase and children and young people have a high level of belief in their ability to keep themselves safe online (UK council for Child Internet Safety, 2010; Ofcom, 2011). These findings are supported by Macheroni and Olafsson (2014), Olafsson *et al.* (2013) and Green *et al.* (2011) who also found that the use of mobile devices was increasing.

Access Research Knowledge (ARK), based in Northern Ireland, carry out Kids' Life and Times Surveys each year on children's opinions of school and other aspects of their lives; which increasingly involves computers and the internet (ARK, 2010; 2011). Results from these surveys suggest that 93% of children own a mobile telephone, 98% have a computer at home and 48% use Social Networking Sites. A total of 87% of the children stated that either a teacher or their parents had spoken to them about internet safety issues. Lloyd and Devine (2009) also explored, through the use of an online survey, the availability and use of new technologies in Northern Ireland and produced similar results to those obtained by ARK. More recently, Devine and Lloyd (2014) conducted research on behalf of ARK using the Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey and found that, according to respondents, the use of social networking sites has risen to 54% and the most likely source for internet safety advice was teachers. The issue of internet safety education was a topic addressed by the present study when investigating children and young peoples' views about the education system.

In an attempt to understand how children and young people use the internet to form relationships Peter *et al.* (2005) researched adolescent friendship formation on the internet and found that online friendship formation was more complex than originally assumed and was affected by the psychological characteristics of individuals and the motives behind their internet use. Online friendship formation was influenced by three mediators: online self-disclosure, frequencies of online communications and motive for social compensation. These three mediators, in turn, were affected by personality (introversion or extroversion). Peter *et al.* believed that motives for internet use need to be included as an explanatory variable when looking at online behaviour. Their research also highlights the complexities involved in forming friendships when on the

internet and indicates that we cannot treat all adolescents the same when researching, discussing, protecting and teaching young people on issues relating to the internet.

The positive side of the internet

Livingstone and her colleagues are leading researchers in the area of children, young people and the internet. They have carried out numerous pieces of research (including the longitudinal studies associated with the EUKids online research) on both the positive side of the internet and the risks associated with the internet, allowing them to become successful contributors to the growing body of knowledge in this research area. Research by Livingstone and Boville (1999) indicated that young people have a positive image of mediated technologies and were comfortable with their use and that being able to communicate ‘virtually’ added a valued dimension to their social life. This research was carried out in 1997 and technology has increasingly advanced since this time, however, the comfort which children and young people have with using mediated technologies is likely to be the same or greater. More recently, Livingstone and her colleagues (2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2011; 2012) have carried out several pieces of research as part of the EUKids Online study and found that the use of new technology was now thoroughly embedded in children’s daily lives with children going online at even younger ages.

Children and young people’s positive experiences with the internet are most commonly associated with playing games, watching video clips, visiting entertainment websites and using social networking (Valkenburg and Soeters, 2001; Maczewski, 2002). Friendship forming, finding support and exploring interests have also been described by children and young people as being important positive features (Valkenburg and Soeters, 2001; Maczewski, 2002). The internet is seen by young people as an

additional feature which allows them to have fun, be creative and explore their ideas and identities (Valkenburg and Soeters, 2001; Maczewski, 2002). Young people have also stated that they can build ‘communities’ through the use of internet related technologies (McMillan and Morrison, 2006).

The internet could also be seen as allowing young people to gain social support both on and offline. Research carried out by Leung (2007) suggested that if information was readily available online for young people to investigate issues that were important to them and if they could communicate and keep in touch with others, then they would be more likely to perceive that social support was readily available to them. Leung also suggested that using the internet for information seeking, fun and entertainment could be seen as a positive coping strategy which allowed children and young people to reduce their stress levels of school and family related stress. Department for Children, Schools and Families funded research which indicated that internet safety was not a major concern for parents and children (aged 5 – 17 years) and that children and young people appeared to be confident that they would know what to do if they experienced any harmful content whilst online (Synovate UK Ltd, 2009).

Issues of ‘Risk’

Before discussing the dangers and risks associated with children, young people and the internet it is important to discuss the concept of ‘risk’ itself. The nature of ‘risk’ makes it a very difficult concept to provide a definitive definition for as it can cover a multitude of different aspects and discourses (Beck, 1992).

As Adams (1995) highlights, *‘Everyone has a valid contribution to make to a discussion of the subject [Risk]’* (p1). From birth, individuals are trained in developing their coping strategies for uncertainties. This involves a continual process of trial and

error plus decision-making when faced with any uncertainties. When discussing risk, Adams is referring to an individual's ability to refine their risk-taking skills. These are predominantly physical in nature, such as crossing the street, working with sharp or hot objects or learning to drive a car. There are also mental risk-taking skills that individuals develop, such as communicating any needs and wants and being able to read other people and predict, to an extent, their moods and intentions (Adams, 1995).

Young people are typically driven by curiosity and a desire to do something exciting but to a greater or lesser extent appreciate or acknowledge that there are dangers associated with this. When learning to ride a bicycle for example, young people become aware of the potential accidents involved in this process, which would suggest that young people develop their coping strategies through experience, in this case a balancing act. Most decisions about 'risks' however are taken by adults on behalf of the young person in an attempt to protect them (Adams, 1995). This same approach does not appear to be reflected in adult's responses to children's use of the online environment as previous research has indicated that internet safety is not a major area of concern for many adults (Synovate UK Ltd, 2009). As the internet can combine potential harm (or risk of harm) in both the online and offline environment it is important to use a definition of 'risk' that reflects this but at the same time understands that some risks are necessary in order for individuals to develop their coping strategies.

For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of risk used throughout is a combination of two sources:

'(exposure to) the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstances; a chance or situation involving such a possibility'. (OED, 2015)

And

Risk Society – ‘*society where risks are of a different magnitude because of technology and globalisation*’ (Mascionis and Plummer, 2005).

Risky behaviour and the internet

Mitchell *et al.* (2001) found that nineteen percent of 501 young people aged between 10 and 17 years who were regular internet users had experienced sexual solicitation when using the internet, with girls and the upper aged young people more likely to be solicited than boys and younger people. Seventy six percent of the young people claimed that they had not heard of places where they could report unwanted incidents. This suggests that young people encounter a large number of offensive and unwanted situations during their time on the internet. Mitchell *et al.* believed that their findings provided enough evidence to suggest that education, health systems, law enforcement and child protection workers should include internet solicitation in their areas of expertise so that they may provide the support and advice needed to counsel individuals who have experienced online solicitation. Internet solicitation should not, however, be used to alarm adults into banning children and young people from using the internet altogether (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001).

Children and young people who stated that they found it easier to be themselves online rather than offline were more likely to participate in risky communications (giving out personal information, communicating with strangers) when using mediated devices. Offline peer problems were a likely indicator of this type of behaviour as the internet becomes a place to develop friendships to compensate for the problems faced with offline friendship (Livingstone *et al.*, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2011; 2012). Younger

children were also more likely to have a public social network profile which displayed personal details including their address or telephone number. They also did not fully understand the protection features included in social networking sites, therefore were unlikely to make use of them (Livingstone *et al.*, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2011; 2012). Christofides *et al.* (2011; 2012) also found young people were more likely than older people to disclose personal information; however their research was restricted to Facebook. This could be addressed by developing parent-child communications in relation to internet safety awareness as suggested by Green *et al.* (2006).

According to Phippen (2009) and Lobe *at al.* (2011), ‘sexting’ (sending sexually explicit messages or photos via mediated devices) is becoming prevalent among young people. Phippen states that young people were confident in their use of mediated technology and that what they may consider to be inappropriate differs somewhat from what the adult population may believe to be inappropriate (in relation to images). According to Phippen, if affected by sexting, young people were more likely (70%) to turn to their friends than they were to a teacher (24%). These findings were further supported by Livingstone (2010) and the findings from the EUKids Online research which found that children and young people’s perceptions of risk differed from adults, that risk taking activities appeared to increase with age and that parents were often unaware (40 – 61 % depending on the incident) if their child had experienced risk online (sexting, pornography, bullying, meeting contacts offline). Staksrud and Livingstone (2009) found that not all young people experienced online risk in the same manner and that there were external factors which could affect this.

Davidson and Gottschalk (2011) examined current research and policy in relation to internet child abuse. Whilst their findings were numerous, of key concern was that a substantial proportion of children who used the internet reported that they had engaged

in some form of high-risk behaviour whilst online. Interacting with strangers, for example through instant messaging or adding them as friends on social networking sites, was perceived as normal, accepted behaviour and not risk-taking behaviour. In addition to this a significant number of children claimed that they would continue their risky behaviour following any form of internet safety training. Children today have a great deal of knowledge about computers and are highly confident on the internet with many claiming that they would always know if they were talking to another child as children use a unique computer slang which would not be used by adults because they did not understand it (Davidson and Gottschalk, 2011).

May-Chahal *et al.* (2012) investigated young people's reasoning when chatting with 'strangers' (individuals posing as strangers) online. They found that respondents' relied on two main features when communicating with strangers: the content of the communication and how that content was portrayed by the stranger. When deciding if they were speaking to a child or adult 'stranger' the respondents' used a number of methods. Identifying a child was based on communications discussing similar interests, identifying with what was being discussed, the person they were communicating with still being at school, the person they were communicating with not having a drivers licence and the use of text language, emoticons and slang words. Identifying an adult was based on the communications being over confident or overplayed with too much text language and emoticons being used and sometimes overly childish language. Through the qualitative analysis of respondents' answers to a survey presented to them after their 'chat' May-Chahal *et al.* (2012) identified children and young people's vulnerability to internet identity deception. Young people continued to implement everyday methods (language, similar interests, hobbies etc.) which they would use in the outside environment when communicating online which were less effective when

making judgements when on the internet. This would suggest that potential abusers who use deception and portray themselves as children when attempting to communicate with potential child victims were at an instant advantage. The issue of how young people gauge the risks of strangers both online and offline is explored further in the present study.

Wells and Mitchell (2008) explored the implications for prevention in a study of young people who had experienced physical or sexual abuse or had experienced high family conflict or were classed as high risk in comparison to other young internet users. They found that the young people in their study were more likely to talk on the internet with people they had met online and less likely to communicate with their offline friends using the internet. Accounts of engaging in aggressive behaviour whilst online were also more likely to be reported by high-risk young people. According to Wells and Mitchell, the results highlight that these young people were an important group who needed help with preventative measures, however, they may not necessarily be an easy group to target. Another implication, according to the authors, was that those professionals who were working with high-risk young people may be in a position to assess if they were vulnerable to internet abuse, such as sexual solicitation. Wells and Mitchell believed that, as technology was now an integral part of everyday life, it was important to develop an understanding of the relationship between internet technology and offline experiences so that accurate and effective policy and prevention materials could be developed.

The Scottish Government and Young Scot carried out a consultation exercise in 2011 with five key groups of young people aged between 11 and 18 years (Scott, 2011). As with previous research the consultation found that the internet had become an integral part of young people's lives which was used on a regular basis, with social media being

the main reason for accessing the internet. Barriers to the internet were identified by young people as being schools blocking certain sites (such as YouTube) and the restrictions to internet access which were placed on young people living in foster care or residential care. In addition, the financial cost of accessing the internet and purchasing the required technology was also identified as a barrier. Participants in this study had all accessed and were accessing the internet at some point and were all aware of the issue of cyberbullying. This did not appear to be an issue of concern with many respondents' seeing it as harmless to themselves although they did identify it was a serious problem for other young people. They were aware that it was possible to report issues of cyberbullying and claimed that young people, social networking providers and other organisations were responsible for tackling the issue and where this responsibility lay would depend on where and when the incident took place. The main finding from this report was that young people had some level of understanding of internet safety but that there was ample room for improvement. Providing young people with knowledge and understanding of what were classed as safe or unsafe behaviours when online was not enough to protect them as there were other external and internal influences which can have an impact on their behaviours and actions (Scott, 2011). These findings were from a very specific group of young people, therefore it would be beneficial to carry out similar research with other groups, including those not in foster or residential care, for comparative purposes and to allow for findings that are more generalisable.

The study reported in this thesis built on such existing research by seeking the views of children and young people for their suggestions on how they would like to be protected when using the internet in an attempt to inform policy development and improve prevention materials.

Child sex abusers and the internet: danger to children and young people

Articles in the media imply that ‘grooming’ is a relatively new phenomenon however this is not the case. The process of grooming a child or children is fundamentally the main practice used by offenders to abuse children (Gillespie, 2008).

‘Paedophile’ refers to those individuals who have a sexual interest in children of prepubescent age and ‘Hebephile’ refers to individuals who have a sexual interest in children of adolescent age who are younger than 18 years (Powell, 2007; Wolak *et al.*, 2008). It is difficult however to place those individuals with a sexual interest in children and who make use of internet grooming as a method of obtaining potential victims into separate categories as their preference can go undetected or can cross both age groups. This thesis will therefore use the term ‘child sex abuser’ when referring to individuals who use the internet in order to groom and obtain potential child victims.

The internet can, potentially, allow those with a sexual interest in children to gain access to a wide variety of information which only enhances and justifies their interest, such as instant access to other child sex abusers worldwide; the ability to openly discuss their sexual desires; the ability to share ideas about the best ways in which to lure a child (online and offline); the provision of a mutual support group so they may discuss their adult-child sex philosophies; instant access to a worldwide pool of potential child victims; the provision of anonymity and disguised identities; readily available access to ‘teen chat rooms’ to find out how and who to target; the means to identify and trace a potential child victim’s home contact information; and the ability to develop long-term internet relationships with a potential victim(s) prior to their attempt of engaging the child in face-to-face physical contact (Calder, 2004; Quayle, 2004; O’Connell, 2004; Powell, 2007; Beech *et al.* 2008).

The internet allows online 'communities' to be established. These communities allow for a network of child sex abusers to discuss a variety of information, including best grooming practices, the best ways to avoid detection and which chatrooms to exploit. They have also been used by child sex abusers engaged in the grooming process of a child who have felt that the child is becoming suspicious and have passed the details of this child to an 'associate' so that they may try an alternative approach to grooming the same child (O'Connell, 2004). Some child sex offenders have stated that it was vulnerable parents they first made contact with online in order to gain access to their children, others have portrayed themselves as children in order to communicate with children and some have claimed that they have not disguised the fact that they are an adult and have used their apparent honesty to gain the trust of potential victims (Sullivan, Beech, 2004; Powell, 2007).

Issues which can enhance the risk faced by children on the internet include the child's own naivety and trusting nature, the curiosity, rebellion and independence of some children and the fascination that children see in engaging in exciting and 'naughty' conversations or images of pornography (Calder, 2004). Both well-adjusted and troublesome or troubled children will engage in a certain level of activity behind their parents' back. Whilst in a face-to-face situation this can be seen as natural behaviour for children and an essential part of 'growing up', unfortunately, on the internet, even if a situation initially appears innocent to a child, a child sex offender can gradually move this into a situation which not only makes the child feel uncomfortable but also guilty, responsible and unable to tell anyone (Calder, 2004).

When investigating the protection of children from online sexual predators, Dombrowski *et al.* (2004) looked at technological, psychoeducational and legal considerations. They found that online child sex offenders under the age of 18 years

were likely to use physical threats and coercion whilst adult offenders were more likely to use psychological manipulation to conceal abuse. Dombrowski *et al.* suggest that in order to fully tackle the issue of online grooming, approaches needed to be taken from technological, psychological and legal discourses allowing for all those involved in the prevention of online grooming, including children, to be fully educated in the grooming process and for preventative measures to reach their full potential.

Contemporary society, according to Craven *et al.* (2007), was finally witnessing much needed forms of intervention being put in place in relation to the online sexual grooming of children. They did however highlight that there was still a lack of recognition and understanding of the full range of sexual grooming behaviours and that this reduced the scope of any legislation put in place. This was further hampered by media reports which were creating moral panics and an increased fear of crime which could lead to inaccurate beliefs surrounding sexual grooming being held by the public, making the identification of child sexual grooming more problematic. They suggested that current measures did not target the root of the problem of child sexual grooming and research needed to be carried out in order to ascertain where to target resources for best effect. Craven *et al.* believed that further research into the phenomenon of sexual grooming needed to take place and the knowledge gained needed to be imparted to the public. This would facilitate both the identification of sexual grooming and the ability to protect children through the development of more accurate and relevant legislation.

Davidson and Gottschalk (2011) pointed out that the majority of research data used in relation to policies and procedures surrounding child sex abuse came from studies of convicted offenders who were undergoing treatment for their behaviour. In order to tackle internet child abuse, the focus needed to be placed on children. At present, according to Davidson and Gottschalk, adults did not know enough about children's

online behaviour and norms, therefore, struggled to create any effective and meaningful educational programmes which made them aware of the risks they faced.

A US study on the prevalence of arrests for online sex crimes against children between July 2000 and June 2001 and the calendar year 2006 was carried out by Wolak, Finkelhor and Mitchell (2010). At the time of their research it was found that established criminal justice data collection processes did not have in place a procedure which allowed for data to be gathered in relation to online child sex abusers which could be used to help inform both public policy and education. It was found that the majority of victims were in the age range of 13 to 15 years (76% in 2001 and 73% in 2006), no victims were aged 10 years or younger and it was largely girls who were targeted for abuse although boys were also targeted (25% in 2000 and 16% in 2006). They suggested that the increase in the number of agencies who pursued online child sex abuse and the increase in trained law enforcement investigators led to an increase in the number of arrests of online child sex abusers. Wolak *et al.* conclude by stating that more research needed to be put in place to find out what sites and what activities put children at risk online, how children can be better protected online and what the risks were of online child sex offenders re-offending in comparison with offline offenders. They believed that there needed to be in place a research agenda which would allow for evidence based education and preventative programmes to be developed which would focus on promoting children's safety on the internet and which could evolve as new technology evolved.

More recently, Wolak and Finkelhor (2013) conducted research which examined whether or not online predators knew their victims in person (face-to-face) prior to the online sex communications. Their study was based on mail enquiries and telephone interviews with law enforcement agencies in 2009. They found that those offenders

who did not know their victims in the real environment and had only met them online were less likely to have a criminal record and more likely to use deception as a form of online communication technique. They did not suggest that this should lead to online offenders being treated as different from offline offenders but that preventative measures should be developed which addressed the offence in both environments.

Ost (2009) argued that the focus needed to be removed from the vulnerability and innocence of children. Instead, children needed to be listened to so that they may inform adults on how childhood should be perceived and understood as this would allow focus to be drawn towards empowering children, especially older children. To date children have been made vulnerable as a consequence of adults' construction of childhood which was based upon an *'unrealistic, dangerous ideal of purity and innocence and sexualized by the taboo we have placed upon their naked bodies'* (p246). Society must therefore abandon innocence as the dominant construct of childhood and replace this with empowerment (Ost, 2009).

Whilst not directly related to the online environment, Meyer's (2007) research supports the claims made by Ost. She based her claims on critical discourse analysis of print media and findings from focus group studies. Meyer believed that the current discourse of innocence not only shaped our understanding of child sexual abuse in relation to law and the government but also in relation to the media and members of the public. She also believed there was a strong link between innocence and vulnerability and it was this link which gave power to the discourse of innocence. According to Myer, one of the most powerful arguments throughout paedophile controversies was that child sexual abuse *'causes the death or destruction of childhood'* (p102). Issues of paedophilia invoke public interest and anger through a combination of crime and sexuality which is amplified by the involvement of children and the discourse of innocence, which lead to

the construction of sexual crimes against children as '*unnatural atrocities*' (p103). Myer believed that the moral claims made in debates surrounding the sexual abuse of children needed to be deconstructed and approached and explained through issue – specific factors. These claims are somewhat supported by Oswell (2008) who believed that government bodies, academics, religious organisations and the like have traditionally made decisions about the role of the media in relation to the protection of children so that any publications made on this topic both maintain and facilitate the public's well-being. These findings would suggest that in order to better protect children and young people it is not only legislation which needs to be re-addressed but also the discourse and media representation surrounding issues of child sexual abuse (both online and offline).

It is the aim of this thesis to begin to address some of the issues highlighted above by examining young people's views of risk and protection.

Tackling the risks and dangers associated with children young people and the internet

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) have carried out numerous pieces of research regarding children and the internet. The difficulty however is that CEOP produce a large quantity of statistics and are happy to provide summaries of their findings but it is difficult to source a more detailed account of their research and findings, making an analysis of their methodology and results difficult to achieve. Tied in with CEOP is the International Youth Advisory Congress (IYAC) which resulted in a Global Online Charter being developed which allowed those involved in the IYAC to produce a list of recommendations based on how children and young people felt agencies and corporations should keep them safe when online. It was

also an opportunity for delegates to suggest how they believed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be interpreted in the online forum (IYAC, 2008).

CEOP also developed a programme to reduce the harm caused by offenders who seek to abuse children and young people online, known as the '*ThinkUKnow*' (TUK) programme. It was aimed at 5-16 year olds and was intended to provide children, young people, parents and professionals with safety advice. It had three key messages: how to have fun, how to stay in control when online and how to report a problem should one arise. Davidson, Martelozzo and Lorenz (2009) carried out an evaluation of the *ThinkUKnow* programme. Their results suggested that safety advice appeared to have little effect on past or planned risk-taking behaviour and that having safety advice in the past 2 years did not reduce a young person's past or future willingness to interact with strangers when online. There was also no evidence to suggest that the TUK programme reduced young people's likelihood to share personal information with, or interact with, strangers online. The authors stated that a high number of young people reported having engaged in risky behaviour online or having received a 'threatening' experience online. Their findings, whilst valuable, were limited as there was no indication of any research being carried out with the children *before* they received the TUK training which could be used for comparison.

Burn and Willet (2004) conducted a pilot study of teaching materials about risk taking as part of a child's learning experience. Based on their research, they claimed that the current understanding of paedophilia was based on deep rooted "folkloric" understandings. The authors suggested that this understanding of paedophilia, along with media representations, was disproportionate to the actual threat posed. As a result, adults gave skewed warnings of danger relating to paedophilia which produced excessive anxiety in children. They also suggested that their pilot helped to improve

children's conceptual grasp of the structure and functions of the internet. The authors believed that quick-fix approaches and advertising campaigns would be ineffective on their own. What was required was a long-term media education approach which allowed children to explore the nature and differing levels of risk in a safe environment which would make them more confident and self-aware when online. Burn and Willet concluded by suggesting computer education in schools must be prevented from becoming prohibitive and humourless environments prompting the children to wish to escape to the more exciting and entertaining world of instant messaging and online gaming.

Stald and Haddon (2008) analysed the findings of the EUKids Online research in order to identify specific contextual processes which may affect research in this area and allow for a deeper understanding and guidance on approaches to internet use and the risks faced by children. This could provide much needed empirical evidence required by policy makers, industry, child welfare organisations and others. They suggested that at present national governments were at the centre of creating the climate in which research relating to children and the internet takes place. However, in countries with high internet use by children the media also played a pivotal role in either setting the research agenda or stimulating investigation into children and the internet. The level of public debate surrounding the commercialisation of children, children's rights and the danger faced by children was found to vary between countries. Empirical research in this area has been found to be initiated as a result of the attempts made by the education system to introduce the internet into schools, educational initiatives and the training of teachers in internet use. Finally, regardless of the influences involved, EC funding has been found to be pivotal in the conduct, shaping and finance of research (Stald and Haddon, 2008).

Finally, the UK Safer Internet Centre (2013) carried out research which investigated children and young people's opinions about online rights and responsibilities. There were four key findings from the research. First both primary and secondary children believed that they had a right to feel safe when on the internet. Friends were stated as playing an important supportive role and were often the first point of contact or communication by children and young people seeking help in relation to the internet. Parents were also classed as an important source to turn to when children and young people were worried or upset about something they had experienced when on the internet. The second key finding related to the enjoyment and benefits of the internet, with children and young people being highly engaged with technology and prolific on line communicators. Adverts, unpleasant and hurtful images or experiences and people being cruel were listed by respondents as reasons why children and young people stop enjoying their time on the internet. The role of reporting and privacy tools was the third key finding. Children and young people reported that they wanted access to online tools which would help them to manage their use of the internet. Respondents' acknowledged that there were safety tools available to them but believed there was room for improvement, both in the access to these tools and the knowledge, skills and confidence in using them. The final key finding related to the need for education. Both the primary and secondary children indicated that they would like to be taught about being safe online. They acknowledged that this took place at present, however, it appears to be lacking with lower primary and upper secondary age groups. The report concluded by stating that teachers and educational staff needed to be provided with up-to-date knowledge and equipment necessary to ensure that effective and informative lessons could take place when educating children and young people about internet safety. In addition they needed to be given support (knowledge and tools from the

education system) so that they may have the confidence to communicate these lessons effectively (Broadbent *et al.* 2013). Berson (2003) also suggested that young people needed to develop a sense of agency and control which would allow them to become proficient at utilising internet devices and would develop their awareness of the risks involved.

Current bodies in place to protect children and young people

What follows is an introduction to some of the most relevant protective measures which are currently in place for children and young people in Scotland (and the rest of the UK). This list is not exhaustive as measures are being developed and implemented on a continuous basis but it aims to highlight the attempts being made to make the internet a safer place for children and young people. These measures will be referred to again in later chapters when discussing the findings from the present study.

Child exploitation and online protection centre

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) is part of UK law enforcement and is committed to eradicating the sexual abuse of children which is facilitated by the internet. Integral to their delivery of protective measures is intelligence about how offenders behave and think, how children and young people behave, and developing technological advancements (CEOP, 2013).

Within CEOP there are three main faculties: *Intelligence Faculty*, *Harm Reduction Faculty*, and *Operations Faculty*. The Intelligence Faculty manages the flow of intelligence between organisations (both internal and external), including dissemination, assessment, research and development of all intelligence. Within this faculty is the ability to track registered sex offenders, including those who travel abroad. The Harm

Reduction Faculty works with a number of industries in an attempt to gather intelligence that will help minimise the risk of sexual abuse to children by way of new and advancing technology. They also provide training, education and awareness-raising for parents, children and young people at both national and international levels. Finally, the Operations Faculty works with law enforcement and helps to minimise the difficulties associated with merging the online and offline environment. Incorporated into this faculty is the UK's only national identification programme, the sole purpose of which is to identify victims of online child abuse (CEOP, 2013).

According to their recent annual review 2012-2013, as a result of CEOP activity 790 children have been safeguarded or protected in the last year, 18, 887 reports were made relating to child sexual exploitation and 2, 866 intelligence reports were disseminated. Over 800 professions were trained by CEOP in 2012-2013 and CEOP actively led to the arrest of 192 suspects (in 2012-2013). Based on their knowledge and findings from previous years, CEOP have updated their key threat areas for 2014 which will be used to focus their activities for that year, they include:

- *The proliferation of indecent images of children, particularly the production of still, moving and the live streaming of child abuse images.*
- *The online sexual exploitation of children, with a focus on the systematic sexual exploitation of multiple child victims on the internet.*
- *UK nationals committing sexual offences against children overseas, including both transient and resident UK nationals and British citizens.*

- *Contact sexual offending against children, particularly the threat posed by organised crime-associated child sexual exploitation and the risk factor of missing children.*

(CEOP Annual Review 2012-2013 & Centre Plan 2013-2014; 17)

Whilst young people are not expected to be aware of or interested in CEOP's key threat areas it is worth highlighting that there are bodies who are continually developing strategies which help keep young people safe when on the internet.

ThinkUKnow

ThinkUKnow is CEOP Centre's online safety site. It is an accessible website which provides information, advice and safety tips for children, adults and professionals of all ages. The website is divided into 5 areas: *5-7 years, 8-10 years, 11-16 years, parents and carers, and teachers and trainers* (ThinkUKnow, 2013). The first three areas are designed to suit specific age groups and contain information and advice tailored to that group. Advice, safety tips, activities, videos and details for reporting any online issues which are of concern (such as inappropriate website, inappropriate communications) can all be located on the ThinkUKnow website. The parent and carer area contains advice and information for adults who look after children and covers both primary ages and secondary ages providing advice, videos, tips and links to areas where incidents can be reported. Finally, the teachers and trainers area provides resources, training, advice and information. To access the resources in the teachers and trainers area individuals must register an account with CEOP.

ThinkUKNow also provide the CEOP 'Click' Button which parents, children, young people and teachers can download. The click button is a tool which can be installed on

to a web browser which provides instant access to CEOP browser tools by the user. These tools include advice, help and report facilities for a range of online issues which may affect children and young people, including sexual behaviour, harmful content, cyberbullying and mobile problems. These tools are updated regularly to ensure the most accurate and appropriate information is available at all times (ThinkUKnow, 2013).

According to CEOP's Annual Review (2012-2013), 2.6 million primary and secondary pupils across the UK had access to ThinkUKnow resources, including age-appropriate films, activities and cartoons. There has also been a rise in the number of primary-aged children accessing these resources and with the re-launch of the CEOP Facebook App there has been a substantial rise in the number of individuals visiting the ThinkUKnow website. All videos developed by CEOP for ThinkUKnow are readily available and accessible through YouTube. The most recent video tackles the issue of young people sharing sexual images and videos of themselves: since its launch in November 2012 it has been viewed over 10,000 times on YouTube.

Childnet international

Childnet International is a non-profit organisation which began in 1995 and works with others in an attempt to make the internet a safer place for children and young people. Staff at Childnet work with children and young people on a weekly basis (as well as working with parents, carers, teachers and professionals) in order to develop resources which allow for the development and promotion of a safer internet. Each Year Childnet has their UK Safer Internet Day which is aimed at promoting internet safety awareness and the work that they do. They strive to provide a balanced approach which promotes

both the positive and negative aspects of the internet (Childnet, 2013). There are two core visions to Childnet, which are:

- *All young people are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be able to navigate the online environment safely and responsibly; and that those who support children - parents, carers, and teachers etc. - are equipped to do so.*
- *Those involved in developing and providing, and those regulating the internet and new technologies (both current and future) recognise and implement policies and programmes which prioritise the rights of children so that their interests are both promoted and protected.*

(Childnet, Vision and Values, 2013)

Like ThinkUKnow, Childnet has three areas: *Young People, Teachers and Professionals*, and *Parents and Carers*. The young people areas can be further separated into primary and secondary school aged children. Each section has advice, tips and resources which are readily available and free to download along with detailed information on where to go if the user needs help. There is also the opportunity for children and young people visiting this site to communicate with staff and become involved in Childnet's work. The teachers and professionals area provides help, advice and information on all aspects of internet safety as well as access to age-appropriate lesson plans and resources for download (plus additional resources which can be purchased). Finally, the parents and carers area, like the previous two areas, provides help, advice, information and readily available and free to download resources which relate to children, young people and internet safety (plus additional purchasable resources) (Childnet, 2013).

Report abuse buttons and privacy settings

Report abuse buttons are a mechanism for reporting suspicious behaviour or content and are being developed and implemented by a number of bodies which are looking to make the internet a safer place (see ThinkUKnow and CEOP). Examples of report abuse buttons are those for Virtual Global Taskforce and the Internet Watch Foundation that are embedded into websites and are made clearly visible. Children and young people can anonymously click on them to instantly report inappropriate material or communications. Unlike the CEOP button which can be installed on a browser, most report abuse buttons require that you go to the host sites web page to access it (Virtual Global Taskforce, 2013; IWF, 2013).

Privacy settings are available on the majority of social networking, twitter and blog sites. They are also available on web browsers and are designed to help individuals control the content which is visible and available when on the internet. Each site has its own settings which provide safety measures allowing individuals to take control over who can see their information and when. They can also be used to control what information is available, for example making sure a child can only access age appropriate material and that no unwanted pop-ups will appear via internet content filters. There are also software packages which can be purchased and installed onto computers and other internet devices which provide additional security (Staysmartonline, 2013).

Facebook provides tools which allow people to control what information they share and who they share this information with. In addition, Facebook has embedded 'report' links into its social network site so that individuals may report content or block those who are posting inappropriate content. In 2009, Facebook formed the 'Global Safety

Advisory Board’ which provides advice and feedback on the development of safety resource. There is also the ‘Family Safety Centre’ which is a Facebook page set up to provide help and advice on a range of Facebook issues including accounts, safety, and best practice. A second ‘Facebook Safety’ page has also been developed which provides information on safety tools and resources as well as links to external sources for information about being safe online, such as, Childnet International, ConnectSafely.org and Family Online Safety Institute (Facebook, 2013).

Internet watch foundation

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is the UK’s hotline for reporting incidences of online criminal content, including child sexual abuse content (which is hosted anywhere around the globe), obscene adult content (criminal in nature) and ‘*non-photographic*’ child sexual abuse images (hosted in the UK). IWF’s vision is ‘*the elimination of child sexual abuse images online*’ (IWF, Remit, Vision and Mission, 2013). Their stated mission is to use their expertise and to work with others in order to:

- *Disrupt the availability of child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world*
- *Protect children who are victims of sexual abuse from repeat victimisation and public identification*
- *Prevent internet users from accidentally stumbling across child sexual abuse content*
- *Delete criminally obscene adult, and non-photographic child sexual abuse content hosted in the UK.*

(IWF, Remit, Vision and Mission, 2013)

As with CEOP, IWF's mission may not be something young people are interested in but it highlights that it is not just potential victims that current bodies are trying to protect but also young people who are already victims of sexual abuse. This may prevent abusers from using previous victims to draw in potentially new victims. Earlier in 2013 IWF reached their 100, 000th milestone which saw 100,000 child sexual abuse webpages being acted upon as a result of their work. In addition to this the work of IWF saw 12 children being rescued from their abusers (IWF, 100,000th Milestone for Internet Charity, 2013). The IWF was also nominated in the 'Making the internet a safer place' category for the Nominet Internet Awards 2013 based on its work in combating online child abuse videos and images (IWF, 2013).

Isis and ICOP

Isis and ICOP are safety measures which have been, and are still being, developed to focus more toward those agencies who wish to protect children and young people online rather than young people themselves.

Isis is an ethics-centred monitoring framework which also provides tools which have been developed to support the policing of social networking by law enforcement agencies. The tools developed by Isis draw on the expertise from a number of areas including monitoring, natural languages, ethics and child protection. They have also been guided by local schools, child safety experts and law enforcement agencies (Rashid *et al.* 2009; Isis, 2013). There are 3 main aims which Isis aims to address, which are:

- *How to identify active paedophiles across online communities*
- *How to identify the core distributors of child abuse media*
- *How to ensure that such developments maintain ethical practices*

(Isis, about page, 2013)

ICOP is similar to Isis in that it is developing a forensic software toolkit to help law enforcement agencies (across the EU) to identify new or unknown media which is being used for child abuse purposes. The main aim is for this toolkit to be used in conjunction with existing peer-to-peer monitoring tools. ICOP brings together a range of experts and law enforcement agencies from across Europe in order to provide a European approach to tackling online child abuse. Like Isis, ICOP is aimed at those agencies involved in the protection of children and young people rather than the young people themselves (ICOP, 2013).

The above is a short introduction to some of the measures currently in place to help keep the internet safe for children and young people. The importance of addressing the issue of internet safety for children and young people was highlighted by the current UK Prime Minister David Cameron who made a speech in July 2013 and held a summit in November 2013 to discuss what is being done to protect children and young people on the internet. Whilst acknowledging that there is still more to do he stated that several internet service providers and child focus companies will be contacting parents in an attempt to raise awareness of the protection measures that are currently in place which they can use to protect their children and provide advice on how parents can discuss the dangers of the internet with their children. Although it was not possible to discuss all measures currently in place in detail here it highlights that there are organisations attempting to help keep children and young people safe.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is widely acknowledged that children and young people are using a range of different devices to access the internet and that the use of social networking

sites by young people is also increasing. Researchers indicated that this has resulted in the online environment becoming a complex area for friendship formation where one approach to internet safety will not be enough to keep young people safe as motivations behind young peoples' behaviours differ from one another.

Whilst there are positive aspects to the internet such as education, support and gaming there are also dangers, specifically child sex abusers who groom children and young people online. The internet has allowed child sex abusers instant and worldwide access to potential child victims where they can remain anonymous and conceal their identity. In an attempt to tackle the risks faced by children and young people using the internet a number of measures have been put in place, such as report abuse buttons, safety settings and websites which provide safety advice.

Despite these measures, children and young people are still at risk of harm when using the internet with many participating in risky activities such as talking to strangers and giving out personal information. A greater understanding of children and young people's behaviour on the internet is required so that these measures can be further developed to suit the needs of all young people. Increased awareness-raising is also required to ensure that these measures are used by the majority of young people when online.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILD SEX ABUSERS: BEHAVIOUR AND LEGISLATION

This chapter sets the theoretical context for this thesis. It provides a review of literature about child sex abusers and legislation currently in place to protect children and young people when on the internet. It also discusses theories and typologies in relation to child sex abusers. Explanations of the grooming process, the cycle of abuse, theories and typologies for both online and offline environments will be considered. The main focus, however, is on the online environment. This chapter will end with a discussion of the main theory identified for exploring and explaining the behaviour of both online child sex abusers and children and young people and current legislation related to the grooming of young people.

Offender theories and typologies

The identification of child sexual abuse as a social problem has led to an increase in the number of studies in this area and there have been several attempts by researchers to develop an offender theory or typology for child sexual abusers. Due to the heterogeneity of offenders, however, this is a difficult task to achieve (Wolak *et al.*, 2008).

Theories of child sex abusers

There are numerous theories surrounding child sexual abuse which have been developed from general theories of crime, a small number of which are now discussed. These theories were identified as the most suitable for explaining child sexual abusers and the process of grooming.

Differential association theory:

Differential association theory claims that criminal behaviour is learned through exposure to criminal norms and can happen within the family and the peer group. According to this theory, criminality arises through learned attitudes and imitation of specific acts. When an individual becomes socialised within a specific group they become exposed to the values and attitudes of that group, more specifically, their values and attitudes towards the law. As part of this socialisation they may acquire from the group information and certain techniques for breaking the law (Sutherland *et al.*, 1995; Putwain and Sammons, 2002).

This theory can go a long way to explaining offenders' behaviour online in relation to their online 'communities' and their sharing of knowledge of both grooming techniques and available potential child victims and what security measures to take to avoid detection, for example, encryption programs, user domains etc. It also goes some way towards explaining how children who have been groomed online can become socialised in that environment and go on to become procurers for their abusers. It does not explain, however, how offenders become socialised into these groups in the first place and where these values and attitudes towards the law originate.

Social learning theory:

Social learning theory, based on the work of Albert Bandura (1963; 1969; 1977) does not attempt to differentiate criminal behaviour from any other kind of behaviour. Criminal behaviour, like all other behavioural types, is learned through observation, imitation, reinforcement, and punishment. This behaviour is then strengthened through reward (achieving their aims) and avoidance of punishment (not being caught). This theory acknowledges the importance of the individual and accepts that different

individuals may commit the same crime but for very different reasons (Akers *et al.*, 1979; Putwain and Sammons, 2002). This can help provide an explanation for some child sexual abusers in that if the experience is a positive one and the rewards outweigh the punishments then the behaviour is likely to continue. It does require, however, that the offender must first of all be witness to this form of behaviour before committing the offence independently, which is not necessarily the case for all child sexual abusers.

Social learning theory has also been criticised for underplaying the role of cognitive factors and for being deterministic in nature. This theory does not acknowledge or allow for decision making or free will in criminal behaviour (Akers *et al.*, 1979; Putwain and Sammons, 2002).

Yochelson and Samenow's 'criminal personality':

According to this theory, criminality is an attribute of personality. Yochelson and Samenow (1976), however, do not agree with Eysenck's (1964) claim that personality should be ascribed to innate properties of the nervous system. According to the criminal personality theory, personality is heavily influenced by parent-child interaction during childhood and is something that develops over the life-span. Yochelson and Samenow believe that all behaviour is the result of a rational thinking process and that criminals arrive at behaviours that are unacceptable to mainstream society as a result of errors and biases in their thinking (Yochelson and Samenow, 1976; Putwain, Sammons, 2002).

Whilst this theory acknowledges that criminal behaviour is a result of the problems in thinking experienced by an individual, it lays the blame on parent-child interactions which does not explain why children of healthy family relationships can grow up to commit crimes against children. It also does not explain when these errors and biases in

thinking begin and whether it is something that happens in the later stages of childhood or only starts in adulthood.

Rational choice theory:

Cornish and Clarke's (1987) rational choice theory is based on a number of assumptions, the main one being that offenders seek to benefit from the crimes they commit. When deciding whether or not to commit a crime an offender will first of all consider whether the benefits of that crime (e.g. gaining sexual relief) outweigh the potential costs (e.g. effort, getting caught). This decision-making process is not entirely logical and is constrained by several factors including time available, the offender's cognitive abilities, and the information possessed by the offender in relation to the potential crime. In essence, rational choice theory claims that offenders choose to commit specific crimes for specific reasons. In order for an understanding to be gained as to why an offender commits a specific crime it is necessary to gain an understanding of the factors which influenced the offender's decision-making process (Cornish and Clarke, 1987; Putwain, Sammons, 2002).

Rational choice theory can contribute to our understanding of why some abusers carry out online child sexual offences as the potential costs of committing a crime can be dramatically reduced and the potential benefits can be dramatically increased as a result of the anonymity of the offender and availability of children online. The internet also allows for the elimination of time restraints and can increase the information held by the offender, therefore, the only aspect to hold back an offender would be their cognitive abilities. In some cases, the cognitive demand is very low for example a 'hit and run' case as opposed to where the offender is looking to build a relationship.

Cognitive distortion:

Whilst a concept rather than a theory cognitive distortions are included here as they are referred to when discussing the grooming cycle and help to provide an understanding of child sex abusers behaviour. Cognitive distortions relate to alterations in the cognitive process to fit the ways in which child sex offenders think. These thought processes play a role in precipitating and maintaining offending behaviour and are assumed to reflect the attitudes and beliefs an offender will use to deny, minimise, and rationalise their behaviour. Cognitive distortions have also been linked to Theory of Mind with the belief being that child sex offenders are unable to or have difficulties in being aware of other individual's beliefs, desires, perspectives and needs (Quayle and Taylor, 2003; Howitt, 2006). It is unclear, however, if these cognitive distortions are part of the causes of offending or are after effects or rationalisations of offending behaviour (see cycle of abuse discussed in the next section).

The above examples of theories which can be applied to child sexual abusers are only a small sample of the number of theories available and there may be more accurate or appropriate theories yet to be developed. However, they are an indication of how an individual can become interested in sex with children and demonstrate how complex this can be. Out of those discussed, however, a combination of rational choice theory and cognitive distortion appears to be the most suitable theories for understanding computer mediated child sex offenders as both theories are evident in the different stages of the research cycle discussed in this chapter, where abusers rationalise and overcome the barriers they face when grooming children .

Typologies of child sex abusers

A widely known typology of offenders, developed by Finkelhor and Araji (1986), is the 'precondition model'. According to this model four conditions must be met by a child sex offender before sexual abuse can occur: motivation to sexually abuse, overcoming internal inhibitors, overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming the resistance of the child. The precondition model was intended as a blue-print for all forms of sexual abuse. The authors claimed, however, that there were two dimensions to sex offenders. The first is 'paedophilic interest', which refers to how strongly motivated sex offenders are to have sex with children which can be evident through their persistence and the number of contacts or communications they have made with children. The second is 'exclusivity of paedophilic interest', which refers to the percentage of sexual experiences and fantasies that are engaged in by the offender, with children as opposed to other partners. They believe that these two dimensions operate on a continuum which allows the assessment of child sex abusers who work on different strengths and exclusivities as well as allowing the use of multiple theoretical approaches to child sex abusers rather than relying on one individual theory (Finkelhor and Araji 1986; Taylor and Quayle, 2003).

In order to help understand and explain child sexual abusers' behaviour Finkelhor and Araji (1986) present a 4 factor model to account for the variety of different theories which are available to explain abusers' behaviour:

- *Emotional Congruence*, the belief that developmental experiences have an effect on the emotional equivalence of an offender to relate to a child.

- *Sexual Arousal*, the conditioning processes which surround an abuser's early sexual experiences.
- *Blockage*, the developmental and situational blockages which have an effect on an abuser's choice of sexual objects.
- *Disinhibition*, the strength of inhibitions faced by abusers for one sex or another.

Blackburn (2005), distinguished between 'sex-pressure' and 'sex-force' offenders. Sex-pressure can be identified through a relative lack of physical force displayed by the offenders. In these circumstances the offender feels safe with children and views and desires a child as a love object. Offenders in the sex-pressure category can be further sub-divided into those who use enticement and persuasion with their child victims and those who use entrapment on their child victims (usually in the form of bribes). Sex-force, on the other hand, involves offenders who will use coercion or physical force towards their child victims. Like sex-pressure, sex-force can be further sub-divided into those offenders who are exploitative in nature and will use a child in order to exercise power and to gain sexual relief without further developing the relationship with the child and those offenders who are sadistic in nature and take pleasure from inflicting pain and humiliation on a child. Blackburn does, however, emphasise that the above typologies are based solely on clinical observation and therefore require further research in order to increase their validity.

A more commonly cited approach to child sexual abuse offender typology is the 'fixated' and 'regressed' groupings. A fixated offender is developmentally fixated either permanently or temporarily in such a way that their sexual interests lie in children rather than adults. These individuals will most likely offend against strangers or

acquaintances (rather than friends or relations). The regressed offender will show some display of adult heterosexual interest, however, they will return to an earlier level of their psychosexual development. These individual will most likely offend against children within their network of friends and relationships (Howitt, 2006, Powell, 2007).

Internet related typologies

Lanning (1992; 2002; 2010) was the first to develop a typology of the internet and computer offender and discussed two types of offender. The 'situational offender' is either a teenager who goes online to search for sex or pornography or an impulsive or curious adult who has gone online and found unlimited access to both pornography and sexual opportunities. Whilst not discussed by Lanning, the situational offender could also, to an extent, be seen as describing the 'potential victim'. Lanning's account of the 'preferential offender', on the other hand, is of an individual who is sexually indiscriminate and has a wide range of interests in sexually deviant activities and has a specific preference for children.

To date, the majority of research discusses online offender typology in relation to child pornography and grooming tends to be incorporated within this. These typologies are not to be viewed as mutually exclusive as there are important areas of overlap between them (which is an area that needs to be further researched in order to better understand the nature of internet offending). According to Krone (2004), there is an increasing seriousness of offending which moves from offences which do not directly involve children (such as images) to those which do require direct involvement with a child and from mediated grooming (communicating online) to physical abuse of children. In relation to the grooming aspect of offending, child pornography is used to both lower a child's inhibitions and to normalise child sexual activities.

Martellozzo (2011) suggests that whilst there is no such thing as a typical online child groomer, there are distinctive grooming behaviours and characteristics which she categorises as 'hyper-confident' and 'hyper-cautious'. The hyper-confident groomer will create either a decent or indecent online profile (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo) in order to attract potential child victims. The decent profile will include a photograph of the offender which is aimed at making a child curious about the person depicted in the profile whilst feeling comfortable about adding them as a virtual friend. Friendship and grooming will begin once the child has added the offender on to their friendship list. Indecent profiles are produced by offenders who post naked images of themselves in the hope that a child will be curious and inquisitive about their profile and add them as a virtual friend. This profile may also be explicit in that it will clearly state the sexual interests of the person. In the indecent profile, offenders ignore all elements of risk to their detection by being clear about their sexual interests in children.

The hyper-cautious groomer, on the other hand, will post cartoons or toys as their profile pictures and will spend a considerable amount of time attempting to establish that the individuals they are communicating with are genuine. These are possibly the most dangerous offenders as there is no truth to the information they disclose making them extremely difficult to detect. These offenders are extremely cautious and are so concerned about their detection that no details about themselves will be provided until they are completely sure they will remain undetected. If they have any doubts, they are likely to end the communication and move on to the next potential child victim. This type of offender, in order to help establish confirmation and credentials, will usually insist on communicating via webcam, talking on the phone or may ask for additional photographs to be provided (Martellozzo, 2011).

All typologies should be viewed as fluid, however, as there are those offenders who may cross typology or work at stages in between typologies. As Finkelhor and Araji (1986) point out:

'Most theories of pedophilia have tended to be single factor theories, and they have been inadequate in one way or another to explain the full range and diversity of pedophilic behaviour. What seems to be needed is a more complicated model that integrates a variety of single factor explanations in a way that accounts for the many different kinds of pedophilic outcomes' (Finkelhor, Araji, 1986, p147).

This account highlights the difficulty in developing typologies of internet grooming offenders.

Child sexual abusers' behaviour

Grooming

'the process by which a child is befriended by a potential, would-be, abuser in an attempt to gain the child's trust and confidence which will lead, eventually, to their ability to get the child to passively agree to abusive activity. It is frequently a prerequisite for an abuser to gain access to a child' (Calder, 2004:11)

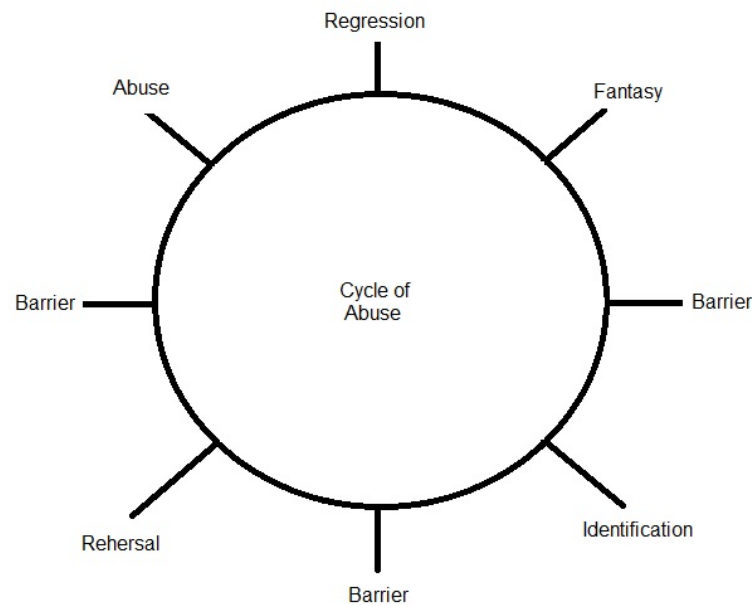
The above definition of grooming refers to all potential groomers regardless of whether they are in the 'real' environment or using the online environment to gain access to potential child victims. This chapter will therefore begin by discussing grooming in the 'traditional' sense before moving on to the more specific aspects of internet grooming.

It is particularly rare for an offender to abuse a child through immediate physical coercion as this involves placing him or herself at high risk of detection as a result of the child telling someone about the incident. The offender will, instead, use a more persuasive approach in order to convince the child to give them what they (the offender) perceive to be 'consent'. If this fails the offender will seek to gain an alternative form of emotional control over the child, for example with threats or blackmail, so as to minimise the risk of the incident being reported and the offender being detected. This form of emotional or behavioural control is what is sometimes labelled as 'grooming' and it has been the fundamental approach to obtaining children and facilitating child sexual abuse for a very long period of time (O'Connell, 2004, 2010; Gillespie, 2008).

Research has consistently shown (Calder, 2004; O'Connell, 2004, 2010; Howitt, 2006; Gillespie, 2008) that in order to gain emotional control over a child, offenders will tell the targeted child not to say anything as no-one will believe them or they will be taken from their home and put into care or other dire consequences will follow. Offenders will often try and place the blame on the child or they will use statements such as, "you like it" or "I'm not really hurting you" in order to make the child, in the offender's eyes, appear as co-responsible. Whilst violence may not be an initial part of the grooming process, once the grooming process has started it can be used as a means of reinforcing the offender's hold over the child. This does not have to involve direct physical violence towards the child and usually comes in the form of *threats* of direct physical contact towards the child or someone the child loves such as mother, sister, or brother (Howitt, 2006; Gillespie, 2008).

It is generally accepted that the process of becoming a sex offender and the grooming process are both cyclic, incorporating a number of different stages. According to Gillespie (2008), one of the main differences of opinion between researchers regarding

this cycle is the importance of barriers: some researchers believe them to be just as important as the different stages whilst others acknowledge their presence but believe they are not essential. Whilst researchers may disagree on the exact number of stages there are, and the terminology used for each stage, the basic premise stays the same:



(Image taken from Gillespie, 2008: p57)

Gillespie (2008) believes that each cycle has an identical starting point which is that the offenders suffer from either regression or negative thoughts about their life which lead to feelings of lack of self-worth. After this 'regression' the offender will start to 'fantasise'; more specifically, they will experience deviant fantasies involving inappropriate behaviour. In some cases this will involve the offender using images of child abuse to fuel their fantasies. It is after this fantasy stage that the offender will experience their first 'barrier'. This occurs when negative thoughts occur as they realise that their behaviour is wrong. In some cases this will be enough to prevent the potential offender from going further but in other cases the offender will rationalise

their behaviour and pass through this barrier using cognitive distortions¹ (Howitt, 2006; Gillispeie, 2008).

The next stage involves 'identification' of a potential child victim. This stage can be a drawn out process as the offender will spend a great deal of time attempting to identify a potential child victim. This can be achieved through placing an advert on an online dating site(s) (originally 'lonely hearts' column in newspapers) to make contact with single parents or befriending the potential child victim's friends or family. This allows the offender to become an accepted member of the victim's social life, lowering the risk of any undue or unwanted attention. Once a potential child victim has been identified a 'barrier', where the offender realises their behaviour is wrong, is presented for a second time. Like before, this barrier can be enough to prevent the offender from progressing further, however, it can also lead to the offender passing through the barrier by way of cognitive distortions, for example, transferring the blame for their behaviour on to the child (Gillespie, 2008).

The next stage is the 'rehearsal' stage. Not all versions of the cycle include this stage some researchers argue that it is an extension of the identification stage whilst others argue that it is a preliminary part of the abusive stage. It is during this stage that the offender will have direct contact with the child, in either an innocent setting or in an experimental 'dry run' setting. After this stage the final 'barrier' can arise; however, it is likely that any cognitive distortions will take place during the rehearsal stage which will lead to the barrier being bypassed (Gillespie, 2008).

¹Cognitive Distortions, as highlighted previously are thoughts or thinking which reinforces and rationalise current behaviour, such as, '*having sex with a child is a good way for an adult to teach a child about sex*' (Howitt, 2006; 165)

The final stage is the 'abuse' stage. This is where the actual abuse of a child takes place and where full sexual contact exists. When the abuse stage is reached the cycle does not end: the process continues as the offender may feel remorse or have negative thoughts about the abusive incident which will start the cycle all over again. The exact nature of cycle of abuse is individual to both the offender and child victim and therefore the speed at which the cycle occurs will be the result of a combination of several factors with a full cycle taking several months to complete from start to finish (Gillespie, 2008).

Mediated grooming

The Virtual Global Task Force's (VGT) definition of Online Grooming is:

“Online grooming is when a person over the age of 18 contacts a child under 16 to form a trusting relationship, with the intention of later engaging in a sexual act either via mobile telephone, webcam or in person.

The relationship starts online and is often continued in person. In some cases the relationship is purely online. Online groomers are known to spend weeks, months and even years communicating with a child to form a trusted relationship” (VGT, 2012).

Calder (2004) concludes that it is now very much common knowledge that a child sex offender may lurk in any internet chatroom. These perpetrators will spend a large amount of time chatting to and gathering information from children. This behaviour will continue until an opportunity arises which allows the perpetrator to move their conversation with the child to a private chatroom or to communications via mobile

telephone which may ultimately lead to a real life meeting being arranged with that child.

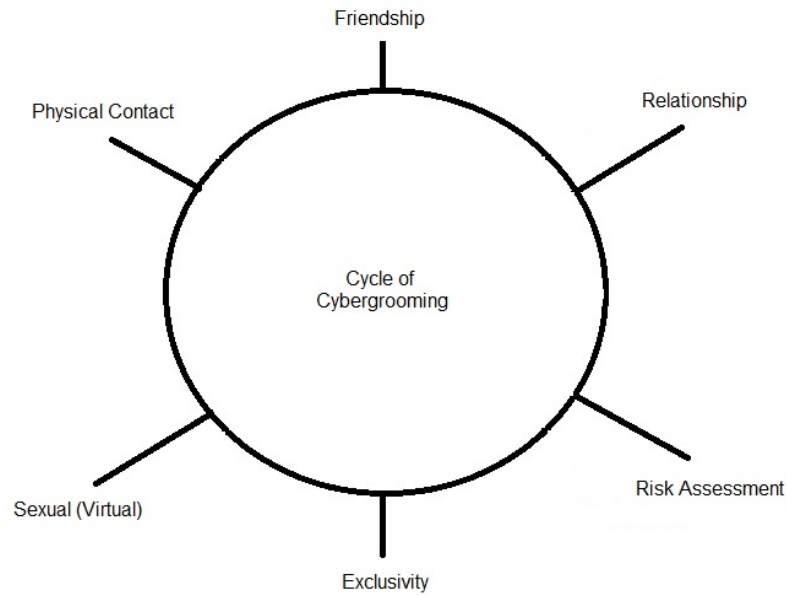
Calder argues that the internet does not create child sex offenders but that it can potentially lead to an increase in actual child abuse. The reason for this is that the internet dramatically reduces an offender's exposure to the risk of being caught or identified. Mobile telephones and the rapid increase of new technology provide even greater anonymity for abusers (Calder, 2004). The potential dangers to children and young people and potential benefits for offenders which are associated with 3G (and now 4G) mobile telephones include added mobility; increased privacy; scheduling; unmonitored usage; preparedness of the features (apps such as Facebook, Google maps, messaging/photograph facilities); exposure (increase of picture sending via MMS, email or chat); exploitation of child via mobile (some child sex offenders send mobile phones as gifts to potential victims); and vulnerability (video calling, picture messages taken at any place and not just the home) (O'Connell, 2004, 2010).

The main concern with internet grooming is that it is difficult to know just how big the problem actually is as a child sex abuser may be grooming more than one child at a time. The internet provides child sex abusers with the ability to remain anonymous; build up a high level of trust with children; gradually introduce children to abuse networks by way of gifts (modelling contract offers, computer games etc.); and to send pornographic images to potential victims during the grooming phase (Calder, 2004, Howitt, 2006; Gillespie, 2008). Those children who have been recruited by child sex offenders can then be used by the offenders to recruit and coerce other children. Potential child victims may be instructed by child sex abusers on the most efficient methods of both hiding and destroying any evidence that a file transfer has taken place, or alternatively, offenders will set-up 'private domains' which are password protected

but allow those children provided with the password to gain access to this area so they may download, send and receive information. By using private domains no trace is left on the child victim's personal computer as all activities take place on the offender's internet account. All of this makes it almost impossible to measure the level of internet grooming that is taking place (Calder, 2004; O'Connell, 2004). It is also important to note that many child sex offenders will, during the grooming process, participate in a variety of behaviours which may be viewed as undesirable but will not necessarily be illegal: for example, talking about their sexual fantasies with other adults and sharing information with anybody on the internet about encryption software are both legal activities (Quayle, 2004; Longo, 2004).

Internet grooming, whilst it undoubtedly follows a similar pattern to the grooming cycle proposed by Gillespie (2008), is argued to speed up the cyclical process as it allows offenders to skip several stages. Quayle and Taylor (2003) and O'Connell (2004) all research the issue of child sex abusers and the internet in an attempt to develop a profile or typology of online grooming practices. According to the authors child sex abusers will go through stages when grooming and eventually sexually abusing children (whilst their terminology differs the ideas remain similar). They believe that developing these typologies leads to a greater understanding of the methodology of child sex abusers when grooming online and that this understanding will assist in developing treatment programmes for the offenders and allow policy makers and educationists to devise pre-emptive strategies in preparation for emerging new technologies and for the revision of procedures currently in place.

O'Connell (2004, 2010) adapted Gillespie's 'traditional' cycle of abuse to highlight how the cycle of abuse works in an online environment:



(Image taken from Gillespie, 2008: p59)

The cycle starts, according to O’Connell (2004, 2010), at the ‘friendship’ forming stage. This involves the offender getting to know the child, with the length of time spent in this stage varying depending on the child and the offender. It is during this stage that an offender may ask a child if they have a picture of themselves for the offender to look at, however this request is confined to a ‘general’ picture of the child; there is no reference to pictures of a sexual nature (O’Connell, 2004; Gillespie, 2008).

The ‘relationship’ forming stage is an extension of the friendship forming stage. Not all offenders will incorporate this stage: it is only used by those who wish to maintain contact with the child. During this stage the offender will engage in conversations with a child on topics surrounding school or home life. It is the offender’s aim, at this stage, to create the illusion that they are (or wish to be) the child’s best friend (O’Connell, 2004, 2010; Gillespie, 2008).

Following the relationship stage is the ‘risk assessment’ stage. The conversations on school and home life started in the relationship stage lead into this stage. This is where

the offender will ask a child questions about the location of the computer in the home, if it is a family computer or the child's own personal computer and how many people use the computer. At this stage the offender is attempting to assess the likelihood of their detection (O'Connell, 2004, 2010; Gillespie, 2008).

If the risk assessment stage produces a positive outcome for the offender then the 'exclusivity' stage will be entered. It is during this stage that the tempo will begin to change with the idea of trust being introduced through statements such as 'I understand what you are going through' or 'you can speak to me about anything'. This is also the stage where the idea of 'best friends' is further developed through a strong sense of mutuality, they are both seen as equals in the relationship. The offender will also test the child at this stage by questioning how much the child trusts them; children may respond to this question by claiming to trust them implicitly (O'Connell, 2004, 2010; Gillespie, 2008).

Once a sense of trust has been established the offender will move into the 'sexual' stage. This is where the nature of the conversations can become extremely intense and will begin with the offender asking questions such as 'have you ever been kissed?' or 'do you touch yourself?' Due to the unfamiliar territory this is an area which a child can find difficult to navigate, unless the child has already been previously exposed to sexual abuse. This is also a stage which contains distinct differences depending on whether the offender wishes to maintain a relationship with the child or if it is a one-off incident which the offender does not intend to repeat. According to O'Connell, the sexual stage is a composite stage which involves several types of behavioural levels which can encompass child erotica and pornography, several forms of fantasy enactment and cyber-rape fantasy enactment with each level increasing in intensity (O'Connell, 2004, 2010; Gillespie, 2008).

The final stage, 'physical contact', is not a stage discussed by O'Connell but an adaptation made by Gillespie (2008). It is acknowledged that not all offenders will go through this stage and that this stage can be bypassed by those who restrict their activities to the online environment. Before the physical contact stage can be completed the offender will go through a second risk assessment stage to ensure that the meeting with the child will be 'safe' and their chances of detection or disclosure are minimal. This is usually achieved by the offender making sure that the child has not stored any records of their conversations (Gillespie, 2008).

O'Connell (2004) believed that it was important to question whether or not an offender's style of mediated interaction remain stable over time or if there appeared to be a sense of progression by the offender, whereby their skills at grooming children became more refined or their desire to enact cyber-rape fantasies became overshadowed by a desire to act in real world rape fantasies. In addition, Whittle *et al.* (2013) suggested that more research needed to be carried out which investigated how the behaviour of young people online interacts with the behaviour of online groomers.

The literature indicates that research in this area tends to focus on the offender and how to break their cycle. Whilst it is acknowledged that the grooming process may be similar for both online and offline environments, the internet offers increased opportunities for potential child victims as well as increased anonymity for offenders. To-date no research has been sourced which investigates the topic of grooming from a child's perspective and looks at how a child would like to be educated and protected.

Vygotsky and internet grooming: the darker side of scaffolding

Based on the literature and theories discussed in this and the previous chapter, Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development and Wood *et al.*'s

(1976) development of the concept of Scaffolding have been identified as the most promising theoretical tools for understanding the behaviour of both potential child sex abusers and children and young people using the internet. This appears to be a new application of these concepts which needs further development and critical analysis but which shows promise in developing a greater understanding of the processes of grooming.

Vygotsky was directly concerned with the role that sociocultural contexts played in cognitive development. What children were doing and how they were trying to satisfy the demands of the task being carried out were central questions for Vygotsky. Culture was discussed by Vygotsky in the broad sense of the intellectual, material, scientific, and artistic achievements and customs of a given society (group of people) over history. Closely linked to this is speech, more specifically language, which Vygotsky believed was a direct 'tool' of thinking. It was his belief that interactions with skilled members of a culture, such as parents, teachers or siblings, form the foundations from which children's cognitive development occurs. Through interactions with more able members of their culture and society children are able to do things they would normally be unable to do on their own (Vygotsky, 1978; Berryman *et al.*, 2002).

According to Vygotsky, children are born with a number of elementary mental functions (innate abilities) including perception, attention and some aspects of memory. Children then go on to develop higher mental functions (complex abilities) through interacting with others. It is this development of higher mental functions that Vygotsky was interested in, more specifically how these developments such as voluntary memory and attention, classification and reasoning require or involve the use of inventions of society and increasingly sophisticated psychological tools such as language, memory devices and mathematical devices (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff and Morelli, 1998;

Berryman *et al.*, 2002;). The emergence of new supercommunicative technologies such as computers, the internet, and smart mobile telephones has produced a new set of 'tools' which are rapidly becoming dominant mechanisms in many cultures, especially, but not limited to, Western cultures. These tools can be seen as enhancing and accelerating children's cognitive development as well as eliminating some of the language barriers faced across cultures. Li and Atkins' (2004) research, for example, highlighted that early computer exposure during pre-school years was significantly associated with young children's development of pre-school concepts and cognition. They found that young pre-school children who had access to a computer at home performed better on measures of school readiness and cognitive development. They also found a significant association between family income and parental educational attainment and the presence of a computer in the home which would have an effect on the performance of young pre-school children.

Central to Vygotsky's understanding of cognitive development is institutional and interpersonal levels of social context. At the institutional level cultural history is seen as providing the organisations and tools which are useful to cognitive development along with the practices which facilitate socially appropriate solutions to any problems which may arise (which can include computers and the Internet). In order to assist with cognitive development, certain activities are practiced in societal institutions such as schools and political systems; for example computing is taught from nursery onwards in Scotland. Vygotsky firmly believed that through learning in school something new and essential is introduced into a child's development. At the interpersonal level, children will develop their higher mental functions through social interaction which will in turn help them to structure their individual activities. Through interactions, information regarding tools and practices are transmitted to a child from more experienced members

of their society (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, Morelli, 1998). Computing skills are learnt at a very young age by children in Western societies and taught by more experienced adults and by their peers, for example, in computing classes at school, by parents at home and by interactions with peers both offline in face to face settings and online via networking sites such as MSN Messenger or virtual worlds such as '*Club Penguin*' (a multi-player online role playing game site aimed at children aged 6-14 years). Whilst this section may be technical and appear irrelevant to the issue of grooming it highlights that children are becoming independent users of computers at a very young age which increases the pool of potential child victims available for grooming.

In order to explain and understand how a child's cognitive development occurs as a result of social interactions Vygotsky introduced the concept of the '*Zone of Proximal Development*' (ZPD). ZPD is defined as being the difference between a child's actual developmental level (determined by way of independent problem solving) and a child's potential developmental level (determined by way of problem solving with an adult or able person). According to Vygotsky, ZPD defines those functions which have still to develop and are therefore still in the process of developing. He believed these to be functions which are still in their '*embryonic state*' and will develop '*tomorrow*' (Vygotsky, 1978; Berryman *et al.*, 2002).

The amount of assistance provided by an adult or able person is critical. Assistance should be maintained at a level which is just beyond the child's existing developmental level to provide a challenge for the child but without making it too difficult. The level of assistance should also be sensitive to the changes in a child's developmental level with less and less assistance being provided as the child progresses. However, should the child start to regress, more assistance should be provided. Cognitive development occurs as a result of working within a child's ZPD. According to Vygotsky, children

can go on to develop an extra accumulation of skills through imitating adults and being instructed on how to act. ZPD can therefore become a powerful concept which can increase the effectiveness and value of applying diagnostic materials and problem solving solutions to mental development in educational problems (Vygotsky, 1978; Berryman *et al.*, 2002).

This concept of 'teaching' a child can be applied to both face-to-face and mediated grooming settings. O'Connell's mediated grooming cycle shows how a child sex offender will interact with a child, moving on to the next stage only when they feel the child is ready or in a position to do so and moving back a stage if they feel this would be more productive. Child sex offenders are prepared to spend as much time as the child needs at each stage of the grooming process and will prompt and encourage the child when necessary but will also allow the child to progress on their own. This can be conceptualised as an offender working within a child's ZPD by 'helping' a potential child victim become accustomed to the workings of the mediated settings and from there to potentially face-to-face settings.

Vygotsky's definition of the ZPD does not, however, provide an explanation as to the nature of the guidance and collaboration which needs to take place (Wood, Wood, 1998). In order to explain how assistance could be provided to a child in their ZPD, Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) coined the term '*Scaffolding*'. There are six features to Scaffolding:

- Encourage the child's interest in the task
- Simplify the task by reducing the number of possible actions that the child could carry out
- Keeping the child in pursuit of a particular objective

- Marking the critical features of the task
- Controlling the child's frustration during problem solving
- Demonstrating solutions to the child or explaining the solutions that the child has partially completed

Building on the original theories of scaffolding and ZPD, links can be drawn to indicate how these features can be a promising approach to understanding the interactions between children, young people, child sex abusers and the internet:

Encourage the child's interest in the task

This feature is evident in Martellozzo's account of the Hyper-Confident and Hyper-Cautious groomer, discussed previously. Both types of child sex abusers aim to attract potential child victims by making children curious and interested in learning more, for example, through the images they post on social networking sites.

Simplify the task by reducing the number of possible actions that the child could carry out

This feature is evident by mediated child groomers who will do most of the communication 'work' so that the child has very little to do. Child sex abusers will set up password protected private domains where they will provide and store pornographic images, security instruction, communication information plus any other necessary materials; all the child has to do is put in the password and they will have access to it all. Alternatively, or in addition to this, offenders can provide children with the physical tools required to continue the grooming process, for example, supplying a child with a mobile telephone.

Vygotsky believed that children could only imitate and develop in situations where the underlying mental processes are already present in the child. The level of assistance and tools required by a child would be specific to that child and dependent upon their developmental stage (Kozulin *et al.*, 2003).

Keeping the child in pursuit of a particular objective

Child sex abusers can attempt to keep a child's interest by either normalising the situation or through promises and threats. Offenders will show potential child victims pornographic images of other children in an attempt to normalise the situation and eliminate any concerns a child may have, thereby, maintaining their interest and encouraging the child to continue communicating with them. Offenders may also attempt to keep a child's interest or pursuit in their communications by promising them gifts such as modelling contracts or computer games. Alternatively, a child sex abuser may use threats in order to keep the child communicating with them, for example, threatening to tell their parents, making the child believe they will be removed from their home if anyone finds out about the communications or asking a child to supply them with a photograph of him or herself which the abuser will then use against the child and make the child believe that it was all their fault.

Marking the critical features of the task

This feature can be achieved through the offender's continued praise towards the child and through showering the child with loving and affectionate comments. Critical features (or stages) could also be marked by the abuser telling the child a 'secret' about him or herself that the abuser claims no-one else knows about, thereby, deepening the trust between the abuser and child whilst at the same time making the child feel special. Alternatively, this feature can be marked by the abuser providing the child with a gift,

such as, a mobile telephone thereby providing further tools to assist in the progression of the child.

This role is also evident in what Vygotsky referred to as the human mediator. This can be seen in current education systems through a person offering praise, critique and feedback to pupils and is used as a form of cognitive structuring which allows pupils to develop organisational skills relating to their work (Kozulin *et al.*, 2003).

Controlling the child's frustration during problem solving

When a child becomes uncomfortable or finds a situation difficult to navigate the offender may attempt to alleviate the child's frustrations by taking full control of the communications. This can be achieved by providing the child with 'stories' about other children who have been in a similar situation or the offender may regress back to previous communications in which the child felt comfortable.

Through these communications, as highlighted by Vygotsky, interactions take place which provide a starting point of the development of a child's own developmental achievement and success (Vygotsky, 1978).

Demonstrating solutions to the child or explaining the solutions that the child has partially completed

This final feature can be achieved between the abuser and child in a number of ways. Solutions can be both demonstrated and explained to a child by an abuser through the abuser showing the child how to keep their communications 'hidden' by providing them with information on what security measures to take and how to implement these security measures. Some offenders will take the added risk of gaining remote access to a child's computer in order to help them install encryption packages and other types of

security features, which will make their communications more secure. Once a child has successfully secured their communications on a computer the abuser may 'help' the child further by supplying them with a mobile telephone and explaining or demonstrating how to keep this communication device hidden and secure. This can then lead to the arrangement of a 'secret' face-to-face meeting where the child sex abuser can further praise the child for their 'success' in the grooming process.

According to Vygotsky, through imitation children are much more capable of working on an activity when under the guidance of adults. A direct consequence of this can be a change in the conclusions originally drawn by a child through a change in developmental processes by way of diagnostic testing and problem solving (Vygotsky, 1978).

According to Wood *et al.* (1976), those instructors who succeed at providing scaffolding for a child follow two rules, which are the 'rules' set out for ZPD: if a child is failing then an instructor should provide more help and guidance and if the child is successful then the instructor should provide less help and guidance. This is evident in the cyclical nature of mediated grooming. Child sex abusers are prepared to spend as little or as much time with a child in each stage of the grooming process and are also prepared to regress back to previous grooming stages if and when necessary providing the child with as little or as much assistance as required.

Brown (1997) and colleagues used Vygotsky's theory to develop the idea of a community of learners based in an educational setting. According to this, children and adults work together on a shared activity. In a community of learners peers can learn from each other with the teacher playing the role of expert guide who facilitates the process by which children learn either through peers or through the teacher. This aspect

can be seen from two sides in relation to child sex abusers. As mentioned previously, offenders will attempt to normalise the situation by showing a potential child victim that other children have done the same. Victims of abuse can also be used as 'peers' to encourage and procure potential new child victims, showing them how to behave, what to expect and how to progress through difficult situations. Offenders become the 'expert' who guides and encourages children through all stages of the grooming process and physical processes if it reaches that far. Alternatively, child sex abusers can become the 'learner'. As discussed previously offenders have established online communities which allow information to be provided on aspects such as best grooming practices and how to avoid detection. These communities are run by 'experts' (successful groomers and child sex abusers) who also take on the role of peer and provide help and encouragement to those less knowledgeable offenders (Brown, 1997).

ZPD and Scaffolding have previously been used in relation to child sex abuse, however the focus has been on children's reports of sexual abuse and sex offender treatment programmes. Jensen *et al.* (2010) suggested that it was important to develop a good working alliance with children who may have been abused and were in therapy. The scaffolding used in therapy lies primarily with the parent or carer who sets and maintains any therapeutic goals for the child. The therapist takes the position of scaffold for both the parent or carer and the child, allowing both to expand their ZPD as therapy progresses. The therapist examines the scaffolding of the child by their parent or carer and uses this to develop future goals and adjust tasks where necessary. Softestad *et al.* (2012), however, highlighted the emotionally disturbing and stressful nature of being a parent or carer of a child who is suspected of being sexually abused and that this may have a detrimental impact on their ability to work with and meet the

needs of their child. This can be further hindered by the child's own ability to express or disclose information and their willingness to communicate.

Bannister (2003) argued that the zone of proximal development was not just a place for learning to take place. It was also an activity which involved social interaction. She suggested that this zone was an area for playing and had an element of fantasy to it. She also suggested that children who had suffered from sexual abuse could experience difficulty in the developmental process (specifically attachments). Bannister used creative therapy in her research and found that the young people involved in her research felt more in control of themselves, more confident and more open in their relationships. As with the previous research, she highlighted the importance of support from parents or carers and that any difficulties in this process, such as the parent or carers inability to approach the issue, would limit the effect of creative therapy.

The use of scaffolding and ZPD is not just used with victims of child sex abuse but also the perpetrators of the abuse. Ward and Connolly (2008) developed a framework for the treatment of sex offenders which integrated basic human rights, values and principles as they believed that this would '*safeguard the interests of offenders and the community*' (p87). They suggested that at present the main focus was on protection of the community which results in the interests of the offender being largely unnoticed. They argued that a framework which is based on or incorporates human rights would provide a scaffold for offender treatment that would allow offenders not only to develop an awareness of wellbeing but also the skills to achieve this. Ward and Connolly suggest their framework, and scaffold, could be utilised in clinical work with sex offenders. They concluded by arguing that their framework would not only facilitate rehabilitation but would also allow offenders to live a life which is socially acceptable.

Ward and Langlands (2009) discussed the rehabilitation of offenders (not just sex offenders) and suggested that offenders required both social and psychological scaffolding. They argued that some offenders may have past experiences, for example victimisation and drug abuse, and that this lead to their inability to refrain from committing crime in the future and fulfilling any reparative agreements. They suggested that restorative justice practitioners were in a position to ensure that any necessary scaffolding of an offender was incorporated in any programs and services they attended. Similar suggestions were made by Scoones *et al.* (2012) when discussing the rehabilitation of sex offenders and predicting the recidivism of sex offenders. They suggested that recidivism could increase if there was no external scaffolding in place to support a pro-social life for the offender.

This thesis attempts to highlight how the theory behind the *Zone of Proximal Development* and *Scaffolding* can be seen in use in the mediated grooming setting. Whilst there have been previous studies which have made use of ZPD and Scaffolding these have typically been from the child victim perspective or part of sex offender treatment programmes. They discuss using these concepts to help a child disclose incidents of abuse and offender rehabilitation, rather than discussing the concepts in relation to the abuser and specifically their online behaviour (Bannister, 2003; Ward & Connolly, 2008; Jensen *et al.*, 2010; Scones *et al.*, 2012; Softestad *et al.*, 2013). It is acknowledged, however, that further exploration of the topic is required. This study is a start to that development.

Legislation: protecting children and young people on the internet

Ost (2009) noted that at present legal research and literature on both child pornography and grooming were reasonably sparse, with a distinct absence of the grooming process

in any models of the behaviour of child sex offenders, and that the current emphasis placed on childhood innocence runs the risk of making children more vulnerable to the exploitations of child sex abusers. Ost based her conclusions on the findings from in-depth qualitative interviews with four police officers, the results of which she suggested coincide with her findings of previous research, highlighting that child sex abusers were not a homogenous group.

According to Ost, internet groomers did not fit within the clinical definition of paedophiles as there is a tendency for internet offenders to target adolescents and that these individuals target particular vulnerabilities of potential victims such as their naivety or insecurity. Online child sex offenders can become quite skilled at communicating with adolescents, allowing them to rapidly gain the trust of a potential victim and move the conversation on to sexual topics. Attention should therefore be focused, according to Ost, on providing children with the information needed to allow them to develop avoidance skills, making it harder for child sex abusers to groom them online (Ost, 2009).

Ost suggested that grooming should, primarily, be viewed as the exploitation of children's trust and naivety through the abuse of the groomer's position of power and trust for his own personal gain. Grooming itself is not technically described as sexual abuse until and unless the situation allows it to progress to such. However should the grooming be unsuccessful for any reason the potential child victim is still at risk from psychological harm (for example, via threats or blackmail). There are also abusers who may not seek actual contact with the potential child victim but still exploit the child by, for example, providing and requesting pictures or having sexually explicit communications with the child. Ost therefore believed that grooming should be criminalised (Ost, 2009).

Whilst Ost agreed that, in contemporary Western society, child sexual abuse was perceived as an extremely serious form of abuse which needed to be addressed by the government, she also believed that the current approach to child sexual abuse was skewed and that there was a continued omission of any rational assessment of the harms suffered by children from their exposure to child pornography and grooming. Ost argued that current views on childhood, child sexual abuse, grooming, and child pornography were socially constructed through discourse and the media. She believed that if the aim was to provide children with the greatest protection from harm then society and law needed to deliver new narratives and constructions of childhood. At present, legal discourses surrounding grooming did not place grooming within a framework of moral harm and did not reflect an accurate understanding of the contexts in which grooming most commonly occurred, therefore, according to Ost, legal constructions of grooming needed to be improved and modified (Ost, 2009).

The topic of grooming and the sexual exploitation of children on the internet was also investigated by McAldine (2006) and Chase and Statham (2004, 2005) who suggested that internet grooming had lagged somewhat in legal discourses. They suggested that one of the biggest problems is the effectiveness of online grooming as the vast majority of children involved did not report or disclose the abuse. According to McAldine internet grooming was one way in which a child sex abuser could get to know children, therefore they no longer became 'strangers', eliminating the stranger danger warning placed on them by parents. These authors argued that we were still in the early stages of understanding the whole process of online grooming which presented serious challenges for traditional policing methods and community safety strategies. In order to tackle this, focus needed to be placed on raising public awareness of the operations of online child sex offenders and how they gain the trust of their potential child victims.

These suggestions were further supported by Sinclair and Sugar (2005) who examined Canadian Law in relation to internet based sexual exploitation of children. They proposed that in order to effectively tackle child internet sex abuse it was imperative that an understanding of the spectrum of offenders this crime embodies was developed through the analysis of the patterns of offenders involved and the varying forms of offences which took place.

Gallagher *et al.* (2006) conducted an investigation on international and internet child sexual exploitation through interviews, questionnaires, documentary analysis and surveys, using police agencies and police records from the period February 2002 -2004. They found that the police had inadequate resources for investigating internet child sex abuse. This led to delays in examining computers (and any other platforms involved), poor efforts in attempting to identify the child victims involved in child sex abuse images and a poor attempt at proactive investigative police operations. Gallacher *at al.* suggested that the high level of manipulation involved in internet grooming could be indicative of a *'deep-seated character trait in these offenders that renders them a high and on-going risk to children'* (p42). The authors also looked at the victims of internet child sex abuse, via police records, and found that in the cases they reviewed all but one of the offences were committed by a stranger and all but one offence was committed by a male child sex abuser working alone (predominantly between the ages of 20-40yrs). Interestingly, when examining the children involved there appeared to be a distinct lack of risk factors associated with the children in that they were from secure families, they were financially stable, and did not appear from the outside to be vulnerable in any way. Gallagher *et al.* concluded by suggesting that in order to provide a more concentrated and co-ordinated response to both international and internet related child

abuse an International police/law enforcement child protection agency needed to be established.

Online child sexual solicitation, grooming and children's exposure to obscene and unwanted material was also investigated by Groppe (2007) who researched interventions currently in place but from a positive viewpoint. She explained how legislators, policy makers and the judiciary were slowly beginning to acknowledge the risks faced by children when on the internet and were addressing solutions which would protect children from harm on the internet. Groppe highlighted that social networking sites have proactively implemented their own initiative to provide a safer environment for children and that procedures have been put in place by governing bodies to allow for easier reporting and monitoring of child sex abusers. The next step, according to Groppe, was the implementation of a national policy campaign which expands on current successful interventions.

The remainder of this section deals with the legal framework in the UK with a focus on Scotland in relation to online abuse. This chapter will consider legislation which relates to those offenders who seek out and groom potential child victims.

Internet use and access has outstripped legislation and law enforcement. The problem is exacerbated by the global nature of the internet which allows perpetrators virtually and physically to cross countries and jurisdictions within countries. This makes tracking a perpetrator extremely difficult, especially when any trace of them is limited to very small amounts of data stored on anonymous computer hard disks. Child sexual abusers can now target potential child victims from the comfort of their own home protected by the anonymity provided to them from the internet (Arnaldo, 2001).

Whilst it is important to protect children from the dangers of the internet, it is equally important to ensure that any legislation put in place does not impinge on the positive aspects of the internet and this is a fine balance to achieve (Arnaldo, 2001; Davidson and Gottschalk, 2011).

Legal definitions of a child

Achieving global harmony in legislation is complicated by the different legal definitions of childhood in different jurisdictions. There are no universal agreements or definitions of what constitutes a child. In addition to this, there are no universal definitions or agreements on what constitutes internet abuse, making the task of developing legislation extremely complex and difficult to achieve, each country develops their own legislation for protecting children and young people.

According to *Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* a child is defined as any person under the age of eighteen years unless the laws of a specific country set the legal age for adulthood at lower than eighteen. This can lead to a lack of consensus for the development of international laws. In Spain, for example, the legal age of consent for sexual intercourse is 13 years, whereas in Cyprus it is 17 years and in Greece it is 15 years while a child is defined in Greece as someone below the age of 8 years (Davidson *et al.*, 2011). As this research was undertaken in Scotland, the legal definition of a child according to the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Section 1* was used, which states that a child is a person under the age of sixteen.

What follows is a summary of specific legislation which is currently in place to try to tackle the issues related to the internet and child exploitation and abuse. Whilst the focus of this study is Scotland, it is important to highlight the difficulties in developing a universal understanding of internet child abuse and exploitation through highlighting

some of the differences and similarities with legislation in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the rest of the European Union. It must also be noted that there are a range of alternative laws and legislative tools in place that can, at times, be applied.

Legislation in Scotland

The main piece of legislation in place in Scotland is *The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005, Section 1 – Meeting a Child Following Certain Preliminary Contact*. ‘Preliminary Contact’ refers to situations in which a person makes arrangements to meet a child under the age of sixteen years. The person must have communicated with the child on at least one prior occasion either in person, via the internet or via any other technologies, with the intention of carrying out sexual activities on the child. This communication need not be sexually explicit in content. Whilst section 1 of the Act is intended to catch those abusers who attempt to develop a relationship with a child under the age of 16 years, in order to gain their trust and persuade them to enter situations where they can be sexually abused, the offence is not classed as complete until the abuser sets out to meet or meets with the child. The sexual activity itself does not have to take place as it is at the end of the grooming process that it is classed as an offence.

The offence of arranging or travelling to meet a child or arranging for the child to travel does not have to take place in Scotland for the abuser to be found guilty under Scots law. In order for the offence to have occurred there needs to be some relative Scottish connection. If the abuser is a British citizen or a UK resident the offence can be classed as being committed under Scots law regardless of where it takes place (their citizenship is the relevant Scottish connection). If the abuser is not a British citizen or UK resident, in order for it to fall under Scots law at least one aspect of the event needs to have a

relevant Scottish connection, for example, travelling, meeting, the making of arrangement and communications.

An additional sub-section has been put in place for grooming offences which take place online which allows police officers from the National Tech Crime Unit (Scotland) to take over communication from the child. Should an abuser continue communications with the officer and arrange to meet the officer the offence will still be classed as having taken place. The initial communication between the abuser and the child may have been initiated prior to the commencement of the above Act; however, the offence itself must have taken place after commencement of the Act.

In addition to Section 1 of *The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005* there are a number of alternative sections which can be utilised should it be necessary to secure a charge against an abuser: *Section 10 – Causing or Inciting Provision by Child of Sexual Services or Child Pornography*, *Section 11 – Controlling a Child Providing Sexual Services or Involved in Pornography and Section 12 – Arranging or Facilitating Provision by a Child of Sexual Services or Child Pornography* where all 3 sections relate to the offence taking place in any part of the world, as long as there is a Scottish connection with either the child or the perpetrator.

The above Act has been further supported by the introduction of *The Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010, Part 2 Section 39 – Offence of Stalking*. This provides prosecutors with the ability to act against people who send threatening messages via email, text, telephone call, the internet or any other form of electronic communication. It also makes it a crime for an individual to publish any statement or material which relates to another and prevents individuals from monitoring another's

use of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication. This Act would appear to allow, in some circumstances, for the act of grooming itself to be an offence rather than the outcome of the grooming process. The Act prevents any individuals from acting in a way that would cause another to suffer fear or alarm and this conduct should take place on at least two occasions. Whilst this Act may be beneficial in a number of cases or further into the grooming process when the abuser becomes more serious, it does not provide protection for those at the initial stage of grooming where communications and conduct are not initially perceived as fearful or alarming but as friendly and comforting.

Legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

For England, Wales and Northern Ireland the main piece of legislation is *The Sex Offences Act (2003), Section 15 – Meeting a Child Following Sexual Grooming etc.* A person (aged 18yrs or over) must have communicated, by any means, with a child under the age of sixteen years (17 years for Northern Ireland) on at least two prior occasions, as opposed to one prior occasion in Scots law, and either intentionally have met or travelled with the intention of meeting the child in order to carry out sexual activities on the child.

As in Scotland, the communications between the abuser and the potential child victim need not necessarily be sexually explicit in content and the sexual activity does not need to take place for the offence to be committed but again, like Scotland, it is not an offence until it reaches the end of the grooming process. In order for the offence to fall under this Act the travel to the meeting must, partly or wholly, take place in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Section 14 of The Sexual Offences (2003) Act, can also be seen as criminalising behaviour which can amount to grooming as it states that:

“A person commits an offence if—(a) he intentionally arranges or facilitates something that he intends to do, intends another person to do, or believes that another person will do, in any part of the world, and (b) doing it will involve the commission of an offence under any of sections 9 to 13.”

Sections 9-13 cover several different aspects of child sexual abuse as declared by English law. Unfortunately, for Section 14 of the Act to be utilised effectively the child involved must disclose the groomer’s behaviour.

The Ministry of Justice announced that between the 6th December 2012 and 14th March 2013, *The Sentencing Council* (2012) would launch a consultation on proposals suggesting how guidance can be brought up to date for English courts dealing with sexual offences. Included in these proposals is the acknowledgement by *The Sentencing Council* that: *“Evidence of grooming by offender’ is included as a separate factor to cover a wide variety of sexual exploitation..... the Council understands that grooming behaviour can take many forms and there should be a more widely drafted factor to enable the courts to take this into account when determining the starting point for the sentence’* (p40) with the belief that, in relation to acts of grooming, *‘it is important to distinguish the wider activity this can involve from the activity required for the commission of this offence’* (p65). It has also been acknowledged that when considering ‘grooming’ offences under Section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act (2003), harm and culpability cannot be considered in the same manner as they would for other sexual offences, therefore, the concepts *‘raised harm’* and *‘raised culpability’* have

been developed for use in grooming cases which contain more detailed factors than what is in the existing *Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC)* guidelines. The outcome of this consultation resulted in the majority of respondents' confirming that they felt 'grooming a child' should be classed as a level 'A' culpability (high culpability) and that this should be applied regardless of the age of the potential child victim (and not just for those who deliberately target a child under 13 years) (The Sentencing Council, 2013; 2014). There are aspects of grooming behaviour which are listed as culpability A factors, such as the use of drugs and alcohol, the use of gifts and bribes, the use of threats or blackmail and abusing a position of trust all in an attempt to facilitate the offence. In addition to these, it is understood that grooming behaviour incorporates a number of forms and a wide range of sexual exploitations, therefore, there should be legislation in place which allows courts to take these into account when examining evidence of grooming and determining the sentence (The Sentencing Council, 2013).

Legislation in the United Nations/European Union

The United Nations and the European Union both define a child as any person under the age of eighteen years.

According to *Article 5* of the *EU Council Framework Decision 2009*, each member state is required to take measures which ensure that should an adult attempt to meet a child, through the use of an information system, with the intention of engaging in sexual activities with that child or for the production of child pornography then the adult may be punished. In order for this to be implemented the child must be under the age of consent according to the relevant national law and the proposal by the adult must have been followed by material acts which would lead to a meeting taking place between the adult and the child. The main difficulty with article 5 is that it is not compulsory and

any country may choose to 'opt-out', especially if their current legislation (specifically in relation to age of consent) is not readily compatible with the new legislation (Davidson and Gottschalk, 2011). The Framework Decision is further supported by the *Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation (2007) Article 23* which states that each party should take all necessary measures to criminalise the use of information and communication technologies by an adult to arrange to meet a child for the purpose of engaging in sexual activities or producing child pornography, where the child has not reached the legal age for sexual activities as specified by relevant national law.

In March 2010 a new Proposal for a *Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography* was produced which further supports the 2009 framework decision. According to this proposal serious forms of child sexual abuse which are not already covered by any EU legislation would now become criminalised. This includes “*the organisation of travel arrangements with the purpose of committing sexual abuse*”. It also includes the criminalisation of new forms of sexual exploitation and abuse which are facilitated by the use of the information technology environment. This not only covers offences related to child pornography but also incorporates the “*new offence of "grooming"*”.

Article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children must be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. All national, bilateral, multilateral measures must be taken by Governments in order for this to be achieved. These measures are to be put in place in order to prevent the following: “*the inducement or coercion of a child to participate in any unlawful sexual activity, the exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices and the*

exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials' (Convention on the Rights of the Child, p10). This is further supported by *Article 35* which states that all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures should be taken by Governments in order to prevent children from being abducted, sold or trafficked for any reason and by any form.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child also comes with an Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. This requires Parties to the Protocol to submit (within two years of the Protocol being in force in their jurisdiction) a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child explaining the measures they have taken to implement the provisions listed in the Protocol. This Optional Protocol does not include grooming.

In 2004, however, a Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography emphasised that there was still a large 'legal vacuum' between countries concerning the laws they had in place with some countries still without a Child Pornography law (Ost, 2009; Special Rapporteur 2014). Ost indicates that the use of chatrooms by child sex abusers as a means of grooming children was also highlighted in the Special Rapporteur with the recommendation that countries put in place legislations which '*create the offence of "internet grooming or luring"*' (Ost, 2009; Special Rapporteur 2014). An attempt at this provision can be seen in the Council Framework Decision and Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse discussed previously but again the act of grooming itself *per se* is not to be criminalised only the proposal to meet with a child.

The concept of sexual grooming is becoming an increasingly documented topic which is slowly filtering into legislation, policy and crime prevention initiatives (Davidson and

Gottschalk, 2011). Creating offences which relate to meeting a child following grooming, with the intention of committing sexual acts upon the child, enables the police to charge an offender much earlier in the chain of events. Prior to the introduction of this new legislation, the police would have insufficient evidence to establish that a crime had been committed as preparatory acts were not an offence under the existing legislation (Ost, 2009).

According to Davidson and Gottschalk (2011), to date research has focused primarily on those individuals who produce indecent images of children and very little is known about those individuals who groom children online and what, if any, boundary lies between online abuse and contact abuse. In order to address this it is imperative that more research be undertaken about the internet and risks to children. Internet crimes are a global issue and therefore require the participation and cooperation of all countries, developed and developing, as in several situations (where grooming takes place across borders) the tracing and collection of evidence is required from more than one country.

Legislation still appears to be in the early stages, however producing legislation on the act of grooming is difficult to achieve as there is no clear definition of what grooming is (several offenders utilise many different approaches) and many acts of grooming can involve the giving of gifts or communicating in a friendly supportive manner. This is further exacerbated by the difficulties surrounding the definitions of a child. Attempts are, however, being made which can be seen through the changes in national legislation which are further supported by the changes in EU/UN legislation discussed previously.

Internet grooming is an issue which is in need of more research and greater acknowledgement in legislation before any attempts can be made at preventing children

from experiencing the harms caused from being groomed. This study therefore aims to provide perspectives from children and young people on their behaviour on the internet in order to allow for a more holistic approach to be taken when developing legislation, with both perpetrators and children and young people's behaviour taken into consideration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the grooming process is cyclical in nature and abusers may go back and forth and spend varying amounts of time in each stage depending on the potential child victim. The development of the internet, more specifically internet communications, has provided abusers anonymity and some protection from disclosure which makes it difficult to develop legislation and decreases the ability of detection and conviction. This is further compounded by the global nature of the internet as there are no boundaries or borders in the online environment therefore complications can arise when attempting to apply legislation to cases where the incident can be linked to more than one country.

Numerous theories are available to explain child sexual abusers and the rationale behind their behaviour, however, a combination of rational choice theory and cognitive distortions was identified as the most suitable theories for understanding computer mediated child sex offenders as both theories can be utilised when explaining the research cycle discussed previously. Developing a typology for internet grooming offenders is complex and difficult to achieve as online offenders can cross typologies or work through different stages of typologies, therefore any typology associated with online child sex abusers should be seen as fluid.

Zone of proximal development and scaffolding have been identified as a suitable approach for explaining the process of internet child sex abusers. It will also be applied in order to explain the development and online behaviour of children and young people. This provides a promising way to understand the way children and young people's normal developmental processes can be exploited by unscrupulous people. It also provides an insight into how we can better educate children and young people so that they may be protected from the risks associated with the online environment.

CHAPTER THREE

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND RESEARCH

This chapter discusses the involvement of children and young people as participants in research and gives an account of the research methodology used for the study. The first section is a general discussion on why children and young people should be and are capable of being involved in social research. The second section discusses previous methodologies which have been implemented by researchers studying children and young people online. The final section is a description of the methodology employed in the present study.

Research with children

Children and young people are active and creative social agents who not only contribute to the production of adult societies but also construct or produce their own 'unique children's cultures' (Corsaro, 2005, p3). Childhood is understood by sociologists as a socially constructed period or aspect of society similar to aspects such as class or other age groups. For society, it is a permanent and static structure which is ever present regardless of the diversity of its members and the continuous change in nature and conception throughout history. For the children themselves it is a temporary period in their lives which they must progress through. Viewing childhood as a structural aspect of society acknowledges that children are a part of society from their birth rather than a separate entity awaiting transition to adulthood (Corsaro, 2005).

Sociocultural theorists such as Rogoff (1995, 1998) have developed the theoretical work of Vygotsky in order to emphasise children's involvement in sociocultural

activities, suggesting that in order to understand children's involvement they must be studied through '*the community, the interpersonal, and the individual*' together as collective activities rather than from the perspective of adults or from a single activity. Social researchers must see children's social development (socialisation) as not only the internalisation of adult skills and knowledge - children's communal activities; their methods and abilities for negotiating, sharing and creating cultures with both each other and with adults should also be investigated. They must be seen as collectively participating in society rather than awaiting adulthood (Rogoff, 1995, 1998; Corsaro, 2005).

There has been a development of interest in research on childhood and involving children which has resulted in a number of studies on children and young people using a variety of research methods. The main change, however, has been a move from research *on* children to research *with* children, the main aim of which is to capture the opinions, perspectives and voices of children and young people on a number of different issues, eliminating the dependency on adults to represent children. This has resulted in the adaption and refining of traditional methods to better suit the lives of children and young people who are now viewed as social actors in their own rights (Corsaro, 2005).

There are some key insights from the sociology of childhood that are helpful for the present study. Research on childhood and children's experiences has traditionally been carried out using observational methods rather than participatory methods or has been qualitative and involved parents, carers and teachers and any other adults involved with children and young people as reliable informants for information gathering (Lobe *et al.* 2009). This method of data gathering is limited because children's perspectives may differ from adults' interpretations. However, this situation is changing as researchers

attempt to find ways in which to include the child as an 'active research participant' rather than a 'passive research object' (Lobe *et al.* 2009 p34).

Lobe *et al.* (2009) believed that this new child-centred approach to research was a positive step forward. By placing the child at the centre of the data gathering process researchers were not only giving children a voice and taking seriously what was being said they were also acknowledging that children, like adults, were capable of being both competent and reflective when reporting their own experiences. The authors were, however, quick to highlight that using a child-centred approach to research demands sensitivity to ethical issues (Lobe *et al.*, 2009). Taking a child-centred approach to research is a view which is supported by other researchers who suggested that children and young people have clear views of their experiences, and were both willing and able to discuss their perceptions (Lobe *et al.*, 2009; Woolfson *et al.*, 2010).

Conducting research with children involves facing additional ethical questions to those used in research with adults (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, 2000; Murray, 2000; Lobe *et al.*, 2009; Woolfson *et al.*, 2010). Thomas and O'Kane (1998) argued that in order to increase the validity, reliability and ethical acceptability of research with children researchers needed to develop a methodology which gave those children involved some control over the research process and methods used. By allowing and enabling children to participate on their own terms researchers could even out or eliminate any power imbalance between adult researcher and child participant; an issue which was not so easily rectified between children and important adults in their lives (for example parents or carers who may prevent a child's full participation in research). Children are likely to raise their own concerns or questions which may be as important to enquire about as those issues brought by the researcher; a child's own understanding of a situation can be as valid as any other (Thomas and O'Kane, 1998, 2000).

Thomas and O’Kane put their views into practice by carrying out research with children between the ages of 8 and 12 years who were being looked after by local authorities in England and Wales. The children involved in this research suggested that they were continually faced with the situation in which they were never listened to with the same attention that adults expected to receive. The authors suggested that using participatory techniques in their research reduced the power imbalances between adult and child and that the children appeared to appreciate being given the opportunity to discuss their ideas and listen to each other’s views, even if they did not necessarily agree with each other. They suggest that children became excluded from decision-making processes because they were seen as lacking competence and/or understanding when really their views were being sought in a way that prevented them from using their competence. Thomas and O’Kane conclude that ‘*The children we saw demonstrated impressive abilities to articulate their views and experiences*’ (p345).

It is important however to acknowledge that whilst children and young people are now becoming classed as social actors who are capable of affecting (as well as being affected by) their surrounding environment and are fully able to participate in research they are also capable of and just as entitled to refuse to participate in research (Murray 2000, 2005). Like Thomas and O’Kane, Murray acknowledged the power imbalances evident between adults and children and young people by highlighting that in the majority of cases researchers were only able to contact children and young people after consent had been provided by parents, carers or gatekeepers who agreed to allow the children or young people to participate. She found limited evidence of cases where children and young people were approached directly (based on her review in 2004 of the Quality Protects Bibliographic Database). Murray’s evidence also supported Thomas and O’Kane’s suggestions regarding participatory research increasing the

likelihood of children and young people participating in research. The problem, according to Murray, was that current debates surrounding children and young people's participation were based on '*concepts, models and theories relevant to adults rather than young people*' (p15). Murray's concern was that whilst the UK was developing a system which encouraged children and young people to participate in major decisions affecting them this encouragement and involvement was focused solely on those involved in the welfare systems, whereas all other children were not encouraged to consider participation as their right (either in research or decision-making).

Cossar *et al.* (2011) carried out qualitative and exploratory interviews and day workshops with 26 children and young people aged between 6-17 years investigating their opinion on child protection services. Whilst only a small sample size was used, limiting the generalisability of the findings, results suggested that children and young people wished to be taken seriously, did not wish to be kept in the dark, did not appreciate adults making assumptions about their thoughts and feelings and wished to be given help only when they wanted or really needed it.

Similarly, a paper produced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) in 2011 suggested that children and young people were more than willing to participate in helping meet their educational needs. Through the use of focus groups, observation, and attendance at meetings with children and young people a number of factors were highlighted which would aid their participation. Suggestions included providing papers which were accessible to children and young people; making children and young people aware of what to expect; providing evidence that adults were listening; providing explanations of information which did not make sense to children and young people; creating a comfortable environment and asking children and young people for their views about possible decisions.

Finally, Lobe *et al.* (2009) suggested that research involving children's use and experiences of digital devices should be evaluated against the child's level of understanding of digital devices, their knowledge and interest in these devices and their location in the social world. They believed that children were and should be treated as '*active and conscious media users*' (p36). When researching children's online media use and experiences it was therefore important to consider the wording of any questions used as children may use differing terms from adults and it was crucial to seek insight into a child's own perspectives. Lobe *et al.* argued it was now becoming apparent that the online risks which were of concern to children (such as bullying and viruses) were very different from those of concern to adults (such as pornography and violence). Therefore, when conducting research into the risks faced by, and experienced by, children when online it was vital that the researcher did not impose adult concerns on the child and produce findings which failed to discover the child's own concerns. The research carried out in the study reported in this thesis therefore left several questions open so that respondents could include what they believed to be something they may be at risk from when using the internet.

Children's involvement in research relating to the online environment

The following section is a discussion of the research methods used in the findings discussed in Chapter One, highlighting that whilst children and young people are becoming more involved and included in research there is still room for improvement and that their participation is still largely influenced by adult presence.

Previous research on the online environment which included children and young people as participants has involved qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches. Numerous methods have been utilised by researchers such as Livingstone and

colleagues (1997; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2010; 2011; 2011; 2012) when researching children and young people's use of the internet including open-ended interviews, focus groups, in-depth interviews, survey questionnaires, diaries and cross country comparisons. Their research typically involved children and young people between the ages of 6-17 years, however, parents and teachers were also involved in the research; for example interviews with children and young people took place in their home where parents or carers were present. Whilst providing valuable information on the use of new forms of media within the lives of young people, the involvement of parents and teachers may have influenced the responses provided by young people. Livingstone's most recent work for example, involved face-to-face surveys of 25, 000 9 to 16 year olds and their parents across 25 countries. The presence of parents during these surveys may have had an impact on the information provided by the children and young people who may not have disclosed the same information they would have if there were no parents present (Livingstone and colleagues 2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2011; 2012).

The Department for Children, Schools and Families also interviewed parents as part of their research which again may have had an impact on the type of information gathered from the children and young people. Their research with children and young people was also quantitative in nature which would have limited the data available regarding the participants' beliefs, opinions and attitudes towards the internet (Synovate UK Ltd, 2009). Likewise research carried out by Ofcom and the UK Council for Child Internet Safety involved the use of quantitative data (2009, 2010). Again, rather than just involving children and young people in their research parents and carers were also involved. It is, however, unclear as to whether the parents were present when the young people were participating. This makes it difficult to assess whether or not there was an

adult influence on the responses provided by those children and young people who participated in the research.

Quantitative data was gathered by both ARK (2009, 2010) and Phippen (2009) who included children and young people in their research. Whilst this research shows a move away from adult participants to children and young people as participants the research does have some limitations. Both pieces of research provide invaluable information regarding children and young people's use of and participation in online activities. The use of quantitative methods, however, prevents the data from providing any qualitative information on the thoughts and experiences of young people when accessing and participating in online activities. In addition whilst providing a clear account of the type of activities children and young people were participating in, they do not provide any clear details on the reasons as to why they participate in these activities. Quantitative surveys were also implemented by Mitchel *et al.* (2001), Peter *et al.* (2005), Well's and Mitchell (2008) and the UK Safer Internet Centre (2013) who all examined children and young people's perspectives on a range of online issues (discussed in Chapter One).

Burn and Willet (2004) conducted research which evaluated teaching materials and included both pupils and teachers. It was a small sample, and information on the methodology used was limited, however, it did highlight that researchers were beginning to acknowledge the importance of involving children and young people in the design of safety materials and training programmes. July 2008 saw the launching of the first International Youth Advisory Congress (IYAC) which, as part of the CEOP, involved over 140 youth delegates between the ages of 14 and 17 from 19 countries and aimed to give a voice to young people in relation to their safety online. In addition 'ThinkUKnow' (TUK) was developed as a program to reduce the harm caused by

offenders who seek to abuse children and young people online. These developments can be seen as an attempt to involve children and young people in research by providing them with the ability to participate without the influence of any adult presence. The inclusion of children as participants without the presence of adults is further reflected in research by Davidson, Martelozzo and Lorenze (2009) who conducted focus groups, surveys and face-to-face interviews with a number of children and young people between the ages of 11 and 16 years.

Further examples of research including children as the main participants include studies by Scott (2011) and May-Cahal *et al.* (2012). Both pieces of research included children and young people and both were based on interactive research. Research activities were designed to be age appropriate and included workshops and online chats. They also include children and young people from a variety of backgrounds such as, pupils from secondary schools in England, young Roma travellers, and young people living with disabilities. Researchers acknowledged the importance of including children and young people in research.

The above is a sample of previous research which has involved children and young people in research. Researchers are increasingly aware of the importance of young people's participation in research and that they are more than capable of fully participating and contributing to research. Changes are therefore taking place which are promoting an increase in the inclusion of young people in research using a variety of different methods. Finding research methods which are suitable for addressing the research question carried out and are also suitable for the young people involved in the research can be difficult but it is a balance which many researchers are attempting to achieve.

Methodology employed in the present study

Aim

The overall aim of this research was to gain a greater understanding of children and young people's thoughts and opinions on protection and security when using the internet, in order to develop a more detailed understanding of the risks of grooming faced by children and young people whilst using the internet. Such knowledge could provide practitioners and policy makers with an evidence-based account of how internet related technology is being used by children and young people. The literature review indicated a gap in information on the views of young people and therefore this study aimed to address that. The methods allowed for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data which focused on the views of children and young people aged 10 – 17 years of age. As it was the intention of this research to partly examine '*the interpretation of the world by its participants*' it can be seen as being set in the interpretivist paradigm (Bryman, 2008:366).

It was acknowledged from the beginning that no causal link would be sought or established between children and young people's opinions relating to internet use and the likelihood of them being groomed by a potential abuser. It was, instead, the aim of this research to place the interpretation of the participants in a social scientific frame (Bryman, 2008). Children and young people's opinions of protection and security on the internet would be placed within the framework of internet grooming and internet child sexual abuse.

Research question

The overarching research question was:

What are children and young peoples' views about the risks they face on the internet and how can they be used to help protect them from being groomed by dangerous adults?

The following questions were used to shape the collection of data on the views of children and young people:

- 1. Where, with what, and with whom do children and young people access the internet?*
- 2. What are their views on engaging in risky behaviour and being exposed to risk from others?*
- 3. What would affect their willingness to report potentially dangerous incidents?*
- 4. What are their views regarding personal information on the internet; do they believe it is safer to give out personal details or to keep this type of information hidden?*
- 5. What are children and young people's views about whether and how they need to be protected from dangerous adults when using internet communication tools?*
- 6. What are the implications for protecting children and young people from dangerous adults and the risk of being groomed?*

Research methodology

This study is based on a survey approach which gathers both qualitative and quantitative data.

A survey was used in order to gather data from a large sample of young people, of varying ages, from all areas of Scotland and was identified as the most appropriate way to address the research questions. Using the survey approach for this study was considered the most effective approach to reducing the power imbalance between researcher and participant and allowing children to voice their thoughts and opinions, whilst ensuring that the desired information was generated. Previous research suggests that children (including young children) are effective questionnaire respondents, provided they are asked questions which are meaningful to their lives are appropriate and have been ordered well (Scott, 2008; Corsaro, 2005).

Focus groups and interviews were originally considered as methods for this study, however, after careful consideration these were judged to be impractical and ineffective methods for collecting the data required. This was mainly due to the sensitive nature of the questions. Whilst interviews may have been beneficial in that they are flexible and allow room for insight and straying from questions, they are also time consuming and difficult to carry out with children and young people without adult supervision. This may have led to respondents providing answers they believed the adults wished to hear rather than being open and honest with their responses (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004; Bryman 2008).

Similarly, focus groups may have been beneficial in that they allow for in-depth discussions to take place between the respondents, are flexible and can reduce the influence of an adult presence. They are still led by a facilitator, however, who

influences and leads the discussion. Like interviews, focus groups also run the risk of the respondents only discussing what they believe the adults wish to hear (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004; Bryman 2008). One consideration for reducing these risks was to run peer-led focus groups, however, due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the training required for the facilitators, this was believed to be an impractical solution. The online survey was therefore considered to be the most effective and efficient methodology to address the research questions as it is a medium with which young people are already familiar.

In order to improve the validity and reliability of the survey all questions were worded clearly with the aim of minimising ambiguity so that they may be asked in the same manner in any future follow-up or repeat studies. Instructions on how to locate and complete the survey were provided for all gatekeepers and participants (Gilbert, 2005). The survey was made up of a mixture of closed questions and open questions developed and set up with *Survey Monkey* (please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey). Questions were displayed individually and were a mixture of single response questions and likert scale questions. These questions were split into 5 sections:

- General Questions,
- Internet Access,
- Gaming Questions,
- Safety Questions, and
- questions about Personal Information

General questions

This section consisted of four closed questions, which related to gender, school year, rural/urban living and whether or not they had access to the internet at home.

Internet access

This section consisted of four closed and one open-ended question. Questions in this section aimed to gather information regarding the types of devices available to respondents, and, which of these devices they used to access the internet. Location and environment (alone or not) for internet access were also asked about in this section with an open-ended question asking for the top three things the internet was accessed for.

Gaming questions

This section consisted of seven closed questions. Question logic was applied to question 1, if a respondent indicated they did not play games online they were then directed to the safety questions (without having to complete the gaming questions). Questions in this section addressed what devices were used to play online games, who they played with and whether or not they used the 'chat' facilities when playing games online.

Safety questions

This section contained six open-ended and twelve closed questions six of which had an additional section for open-ended clarification. These questions related to issues of safety when online and related to parent, school and the government, as well as the 'stranger-danger' aspect of the internet.

Personal Information questions

This last section contained fourteen closed questions, six of which had an additional section for clarification and two open-ended questions. This section addressed disclosure of personal information, adding strangers to their social network accounts

and meeting with strangers. A final open-ended question allowed respondents to disclose anything they felt was missing in the previous questions.

An online survey consisting of 50 open and closed questions was therefore developed for distribution to all schools in Scotland for pupils between the ages of 10 and 17 years to complete during school hours. This allowed for quantitative and qualitative data to be generated and analysed, providing information on both children and young people's use of new and developing technology to access the internet and their views on safety and protection on the internet.

It was decided that surveys which were administered to children and young people in a classroom setting which they were comfortable with and without a researcher influencing them was the most effective approach to take. The use of an online survey eliminated the need to travel to all areas of Scotland which may not always have been possible (due to constraints such as time, weather and expenses). It also eliminated the dependency on postal services which are expensive, time consuming and a difficult means by which to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity through the risk of information going missing or being damaged in the post or made visible to postal service employees.

As the topic of investigation was the internet and the target sample was children and young people, who have been raised in a technological society and are therefore comfortable with the online environment, an online survey was a familiar format to them for collecting data. It also allowed for some control over the survey by, for example, displaying only one question at a time rather than all the questions at once (which may have appeared daunting) and choosing the opening and closing dates and times of the survey ensuring all data was collected during schools hours rather than

outside of school hours where there was a risk of someone else completing the survey on the young person's behalf. The ability to include question logic was also implemented; therefore, based on the response of a respondent the online survey would automatically skip through questions which were inapplicable to that respondent. For closed-questions the online survey also allowed for the automatic downloading of answers on to a database thus facilitating coding and reducing the likelihood of errors or duplication (Bryman, 2008). It also added to the anonymity of the responses as the survey closed automatically on completion, therefore, there was no record of who put what answers.

Materials

Materials for this research were constructed to ensure that children were NOT introduced to concepts of grooming or sexual abuse. A mixture of closed and open questions were asked which only aimed to gather information about their views on risks and protection. Children and young people were NOT asked to disclose personal negative experiences. The literature covered for this thesis was used only as a means with which to inform the content of the survey and to analyse the data and not to deduce any causal relationships with the findings or to request information from respondents in relation to their experiences of internet grooming. This entailed some care when designing the survey in order to ensure that the right balance was achieved between finding out the desired information required for the research and not exposing the children and young people involved to any concepts which were beyond their experience and understanding. In addition, the questions had to be suitable for children as young as 10 years and young people up to the age of 17 years. Therefore, significant time was devoted to developing the survey until an adequate balance was achieved. A

small pilot study was then run to highlight any issues surrounding the wording or format of any of the questions.

Closed questions were designed to gather instant opinions which did not require qualitative analysis, for example:

- **Do you think that schools are doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet?**

Yes No

Open-ended questions were designed to gather qualitative information to complement and expand on the closed questions, such as:

- **Is there anything you would like schools to do that they are not already doing to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet?**

Participants

All participants were aged between 10 and 17 years as the literature review suggested that children under the age of ten years have still to develop all the necessary skills required to fully participate in the online environment while young people over the age of seventeen years are less likely to seek advice or help when using the internet, are viewed as adults and are more likely to use the internet in private and away from parents, teachers etc. Children under the age of ten years are also under the current age limits for registering with many of the social networking sites and chat room forums that are available (although it is acknowledged that this does not stop young children from having an account). Those over the age of seventeen are not classed as children according to the current Scottish legal system (see Chapter Two) and are therefore not

protected under the legislation referred to in this thesis (it is acknowledged, however, there are exceptions to this, such as vulnerable people and young people with disabilities).

Sampling

An opportunity sample population was used for this research, obtained through a number of gatekeepers. Initially, letters were sent out to all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland requesting their permission to include schools within their authority in the research, with the aim of gaining an even spread of participating schools across Scotland. This covered 2,153 Primary schools (370, 839 pupils) and 376 (303, 978 pupils) Secondary schools not including Special schools (correct at 1/11/2011) (Scottish Government, 2012). Once agreements had been negotiated with the 12 Local Authorities who agreed to take part letters were then sent out to all 687 schools within their area requesting their participation in the research.

Sample Characteristics:

A total of twenty-five primary and six secondary schools participated in the online survey. The sample characteristics of the respondents are displayed in table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 Table of sample characteristics

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Male | 411 | Rural | 168 | | | | | |
| Female | 445 | Urban | 684 | | | | | |
| School Year | P6 (10yrs) 97 | P7 (11 yrs) 123 | S1 (12yrs) 136 | S2 (13yrs) 332 | S3 (14yrs) 65 | S4 (15yrs) 46 | S5 (16yrs) 37 | S6 (17yrs) 19 |

*discrepancies in numbers are due to some respondents failing to provide this information

The sample characteristics suggest that whilst a large number of pupils took part in the study (859 in total), the schools involved accounted for approximately 1.2% of primary schools and 1.5% of secondary schools. This limits the generalizability of the findings,

however, the spread of schools across Scotland allowed for a sample of results to be obtained from a wide area of Scotland rather than the potential risk of results only being available for the central belt of Scotland. The representativeness of the schools is therefore limited in the number of pupils who took part but not in the spread of schools included.

Despite the limited generalizability of the sample, the sample itself was a welcomed achievement considering the nature of the topic and the limited time-scale of the research. The schools who did agree to take part were keen and enthusiastic for their pupils to take part, and indicated their eagerness to see the results. Eight hundred and fifty-nine young people were encouraged by their school to participate in the survey and all respondents worked through all 50 questions to the end of the survey. Whilst some skipped a question, no respondent exited the survey early or produced an incomplete survey. Responses to open-ended questions directly related to the nature of the questions, highlighting their engagement with the survey. The survey was open for 6 months, however included in this time was exam leave for older respondents, seven weeks school holidays plus either one or two weeks October holidays (depending on the location of the school).

Prior to commencement of the survey Local Authorities and schools were provided with hard copies or digital copies of the survey on request so that they could examine the questions that their pupils would be asked.

Consent

Consent was based on an opt-in approach for Local Authorities and Schools and an opt-out approach for children and young people. This was first directed at Local Authorities, then Schools and finally there was a notification at the commencement of

the survey informing pupils of their ability to withdraw at any time. It was believed that this approach ensured confirmation that all necessary gatekeepers had received the information letters and were aware of the research and what they were consenting to, therefore making an informed decision. It was accepted that using an opt-in approach ran the risk of obtaining a biased sample of Local Authorities or schools in that it may have only been those gatekeepers who were interested in or concerned about the topic who agreed to participate and those gatekeepers who were very protective of their schools or who take less interest in the subject may not have agreed.

All gatekeepers were informed of the main aims of the research prior to commencement of the data gathering processes, including the specific research question being covered by the online survey. Careful consideration was given to the wording of all research statements to avoid biasing potential responses and to avoid causing any undue concern. By providing information about all aspects of the data gathering process it was expected that response rates would be higher and participants would be more likely to have provided responses that are more accurate as the teachers involved were in a better position to assist them.

Once access had been granted by Local Authorities, schools were provided with a cover letter and a PDF version of the online survey on request. Once access had been granted by schools, school protocols were then followed regarding consent of pupils, ensuring that the correct procedures for each school were carried out. These protocols were the same for all schools in that the school selected a suitable time/class for the survey to be completed and monitored the class whilst this was being completed. In accordance with the accepted protocol for research in schools in Scotland consent was provided through the confirmation of the schools' willingness to participate, no consent forms were

signed by anyone; the head teacher of the school provided the consent for all pupils who participated. There were no additional or special requests made regarding consent. Some schools did request an example of a consent form but then opted not to use it and decided to follow their standard protocols.

I chose to follow the standard school protocol, as indicated by each school, for such research because I was not physically present when the online survey was being completed, no contact was made between the participants and myself at any time and no personal information was requested. These standard protocols were a custom and practice of schools and eliminated the need for parental consent. These standard protocols for obtaining consent and participation were discussed with the University Ethics Committee who provided approval for the research to be continued using the school protocols.

Assurances were given that all data gathered was to be stored on an external hard drive which was encrypted and stored in a locked cabinet and was only accessible to me. Assurances were also given that questions could be asked at any point during the research process and that participants were free to withdraw, without reason, at any stage of the data gathering process.

Procedure

Pilot study

A small pilot study of the online survey was carried out using one Primary school and one Secondary school. These schools were eliminated from the final research procedures so that there was no risk of any of the participants taking part in the final research.

Via informal contacts a convenience sample of 30 participants volunteered to take part in the pilot, with ages ranging from 10-17 years. Half of the volunteers were asked to look at the word document of the survey and to comment on the survey providing their views on the questions and if they understood them or felt changes were needed. The other half were given access to the online version and asked to complete the survey and give feedback on the design, usability and how understandable the questions were/were not. This provided a combination of comments and responses.

I was present with volunteers when they completed the task if they requested. This allowed for instant clarification on any question they found confusing and allowed me to see what exactly was confusing about the question, therefore allowing me to rectify the problem straight away and ensuring that any changes made make sense to those participating in the pilot.

There were no negative comments regarding the design and usability of the online survey. Some of the questions in the final section of the survey were deemed a little confusing and were re-worded and broken into separate questions to make them more understandable. It was felt that the gaming section would be confusing for those who did not play games online and so question logic was introduced. A second version of the online survey was then re-piloted with all 30 volunteers (those who had completed the first version and those who had completed the paper version originally). This allowed for feedback to be obtained from those who could see the changes that had been made and also from those who had never used the online survey before as even though the questions on paper were the same the layout and navigation was very different. The feedback from the second pilot was all positive with no suggestions for changes to the questions but some comment about the plain background of the survey. This was rectified by the inclusion of pictures in the survey. These comments helped

with the design of the final survey and the responses helped show if the questions were generating the type of responses desired from the survey.

Final survey

The survey was accessed via a web link which each school was provided with and was available from 1st May 2012 to 1st November 2012. The survey was designed so that it contained full, easy to read instructions and could be completed independently, keeping all responses fully anonymous. The survey took no longer than 35 – 45 minutes to complete. Each school had their pupils complete the survey during a class that produced minimal disruption to the school day. Having the survey completed during a class allowed for those pupils not participating in the research to carry-on with their normal class work.

Once the pupil had accessed the survey a set of instructions appeared on the screen and the pupil was required to follow the instructions and complete each question as they appeared. After completion of the survey, the pupil exited the site.

The results of the survey were stored on Survey Monkey until closure of the survey on the 1st November 2012 where they were collated, stored and downloaded. Once downloaded, the survey was closed on Survey Monkey and the link to the survey was made redundant. The results were then ready for analysis.

Once the survey had ended all participating schools were contacted via email and thanked for their time, participation and support and were asked to communicate my appreciation to their pupils. They were also informed that a summary of results would be provided on completion of the data analysis and thesis. Participating Local Authorities were also communicated with to confirm that the survey was completed and

to thank them for their support and participation. Local Authorities were also informed that they would receive a summary report on completion of the data analysis and thesis and that an electronic copy of the thesis would be available on request (this had been agreed with some Local Authorities during initial communications). Communications with Local Authorities had been left open because all participating Local Authorities had indicated that they were happy to be contacted in the future once the current study was completed. Both schools and Local Authorities were also given the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the research (no questions were asked but the offer remains open).

After completion of the initial analysis a summary of findings was produced and sent out to all Local Authorities and Schools involved in the survey.

Data Quality

The quality of data generated by respondents was far richer than originally expected, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative data. As all respondents worked through to the end of the survey, no data sets had to be completely removed from data analysis thus strengthening the quality of data collected. Open-ended questions elicited detailed responses that the respondents had clearly put a lot of thought into before responding and if it was something they were unsure of, respondents stated this and attempted to explain why.

Quantitative

Closed question were used throughout the survey to generate numerical data which could be analysed to produce statistical representations of the opinions and behaviours of young people on the internet. When addressing the face validity of these questions

the pilot study indicated that chosen questions addressed the desired behaviours and opinions.

The fact that the data from the present study produced results on children and young people's behaviour on the internet that were in line with many of the leading researchers in this area suggests that the survey produced valid responses. Due to the limited time-scale of the research, however, whether or not the measures would be stable over time could not be assessed. The closed questions do however add to confidence about the reliability of the data as despite the spread of schools involved and the six week school holiday in the middle of the data gathering process there was coherence and consistency in the type of results obtained across the sample.

The main threat to the validity and reliability of the quality of the data generated was the completion of the survey without my presence. There was the risk that some respondents ticked random boxes or additional boxes (in attempt to show off or indicate that they have more devices than they actually do, or for several alternative reasons). The spread of results or the clusters of results produced suggest that this was unlikely; however, it is not something that could be controlled for. In addition, the nature of the survey meant that concurrent, predictive and construct validity could not be clearly assessed.

Qualitative

Including a number of open-ended questions or additional information and explanation sections in the survey allowed for some detailed, thorough and insightful responses to be provided by respondents. However, the richness of the qualitative data provides a measure of comfort that the respondents were engaged with the spirit of the issues being explored by the quantitative responses.

As with the closed questions the face validity of the responses was addressed during the pilot study and whilst there were some questions that needed to be re-worded or clarified the vast majority of question generated the desired responses. It may, however, have been beneficial to have included an 'additional information' box for all closed questions as this may have strengthened the validity and reliability of the survey as a whole. By having to explain their response to each question respondents may have been more likely to put extra thought into the closed questions before selecting their responses.

Whilst time restraint may prevent an accurate or confident assessment of the stability of the survey over time the inclusion of holidays and the effort respondents put in to completing the survey would suggest that the survey would be likely to be stable over time.

The main threat to the validity and reliability of the data quality was the concern that respondents may be sitting close together and were in a position to read each other's responses or discuss their responses prior to completing the survey. The difference in the quality, wording and detail of the open ended questions would, however, suggest that this was not the case. There was no bunching of survey responses and no sets of similarly worded responses.

In an attempt to increase the reliability of the survey as a whole the questions were separated into section and question logic was applied in areas. This approach was taken to increase the reliability of the survey and attempt to prevent the responses to earlier questions influencing the responses of later questions. Unfortunately, the risk of this happening was not something that could be totally controlled for.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

All data was collated and downloaded in the form of an excel file and a PDF file. All closed questions were manually coded and transferred to Statistical Packaging for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for some initial descriptive analysis.

Crosstabulations and more detailed inferential statistical analyses (Chi-Square) were then carried out to investigate potential relationships between any of the variables. Below is an example of the analyses carried out on the question highlighted previously (in relation to gender) - *Do you think that schools are doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet?:*

Chi-Square Tests

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (2-sided) | Exact Sig. (1-sided) |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | .550 ^a | 1 | .458 | | |
| Continuity Correction ^b | .432 | 1 | .511 | | |
| Likelihood Ratio | .549 | 1 | .459 | | |
| Fisher's Exact Test | | | | .500 | .255 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .549 | 1 | .459 | | |
| N of Valid Cases | 814 | | | | |

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 85.61.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Crosstabulations and Chi-Square analyses were carried out on all closed questions.

Analyses were carried out with *Gender*, *School Year* and living in *Rural/Urban* used as the independent variables. Participants in the present study were not asked to disclose their ethnicity as, based on the literature review, this was a variable that was believed to have no significant impact on children and young people's views of the internet as they all use similar devices to access the internet. Since no significant differences were found between the opinions of children and young people who live in rural areas and those who live in urban areas, these findings are not presented in detail, although there is some discussion of why there may be no such differences.

The findings were then incorporated with the results from the open questions, allowing a more detailed and in-depth account to be produced.

Qualitative

The responses to the nine open-ended questions plus 20 questions which were supplementary to closed-questions were placed into separate PDF files and transferred to NVivo Software for analysis. The textual responses were coded individually and collectively and incorporated alongside the quantitative data to allow for a full discussion of the issues raised. This also allowed for key themes to be developed which could either be topic or question specific or an issue which crossed many topics or questions. Out of these 29 open-ended questions 10,523 responses were provided which amounted to 101,680 words for analysis.

The key themes identified and used for further analysis were: *Behaviour*, *Strangers*, *Education* and *Government*. These themes emerged from both qualitative and quantitative data and there is a chapter dedicated to each of them which involves further analysis and identification of sub-themes. All quotes reproduce the children and young

people's spelling exactly and no corrections have been applied in order to preserve the authenticity of their voices. The examples below highlight the quality of information obtained:

'i know enough to be safe on the internet its in my own hands from now'

'stranger can be harmful or dangerous to us, but i suppose maybe on the internet, people could give out false information so it might make it a bit more dangerous'

'schools should teach us more about the safety bottons on networking sites'

'our goverment is good so i am sure they know what they are doing'

Ethics

The ESRC Ethical Framework 2010 was used to guide the study. As the survey was online the Association of Internet researchers 2002 Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research Guidelines were referred to. Whilst the survey was online it was taking place in a secure online environment, rather than through emails, chatrooms or webpages, therefore, it was believed that these guidelines could be adhered to and no concerns would arise in this instance. Because new technology is continually developing this situation was closely monitored and reviewed. Survey Monkey's Security and Privacy Statements were both referred to prior to subscription in order to ensure that the process complied with the ESRC's Ethical framework 2010.

The target sample of children and young people should be classed as a potentially vulnerable group. Every effort was made to ensure that any power imbalance between

researcher and participants was kept to a minimum or eliminated. The reason for the research and the method of data collection was explained in a way that aimed to be fully comprehensible to both the participants and gatekeepers. Every effort was also made to ensure that no negative experiences occurred as a result of the research, including minimising any discomfort or concerns about the research process itself.

Withdrawal

All children and young people were re-assured through teachers and in writing at the beginning of the survey that they were by no way obliged to participate in the research and that should they decide to withdraw at any time there would be no negative repercussions from school teachers, parents or me as the researcher (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). The meaning of anonymity was also clearly explained so that all participants had an understanding of the concept.

Risk of harm and disclosure

Whilst the aim of this research was to expose participants to no physical or psychological risks of harm this was a potentially vulnerable group and there were risks of possible distress, embarrassment or harm. However, I did all in my power to minimise such risks of harm. Prior to commencing the research provisions were made to ensure that full contact details of Social Workers and Police Liaison Officers were available, including the details of the lead child protection officer for the school and an out of hours contact, should any of the participants wish to disclose any concerns they may have. Whilst it was made clear that it was intended that the research would be anonymous and confidential, should a child wish to disclose concerns details would be available on how this could be achieved. Should there be any disclosure of a potentially dangerous individual online participants were informed that no personal details of this

disclosure would be included in the thesis, however, the authority figures mentioned previously would be fully informed about the disclosure. This would be achieved through the schools Internet Protocol (IP) address. Whilst the survey was entirely anonymous and no names provided of the pupils or schools involved, Survey Monkey does store the IP addresses of participants in the event a situation arises where a participant should need to be contacted. Thankfully, no such issues arose throughout the data gathering process.

Procedures were agreed between myself and the head teachers of the school involved with all contacts identified so that help and support could be activated immediately should a situation arise where disclosure occurred. The majority of schools had their own procedures already in place for events such as this. If it was believed necessary to break confidentiality then the participant involved would be informed of the action being taken unless it was firmly believed that to do so would put the child or young person at further risk of harm. As no situation arose throughout the data gathering which raised concerns about a participant these procedures were never implemented.

Additional information

An information leaflet was made available, should it be required, which contained web addresses and contact telephone numbers. No such request was made by any school. Teachers were also provided with my full contact details so they may discuss any questions the participants may have had after the research was complete. Again, no such request was made.

The findings from the research discussed in this chapter are presented in the following four chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

This chapter presents the findings in relation to children, young people and their self-reported behaviour on the internet. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be presented which relate to respondents' comments on issues of protection and security on the internet and their behaviour when using the internet. Tables presenting the detailed percentages of findings can be found in Appendix B.

How children and young people access the internet

The children and young people provided valuable information regarding their behaviour on the internet and their attitudes towards the internet and the online environment. Findings suggest that going on the internet is a private activity. The majority of children and young people, 72% (620/857), reported that they accessed the internet at home in their bedroom and on their own, compared with 10% (82/857) who stated that they were supervised whilst on the internet in their bedroom. Forty seven percent (404/857) stated they accessed the internet whilst outside the home, either on their own or with friends. When asked who they usually accessed the internet with (rather than where), 84% (710/839) stated that they accessed the internet on their own.

Internet access is becoming more portable with laptop computers, smartphones (including iPhones) and iPods being used more than desktop computers. A large number of children and young people reported that they were in possession of portable devices which could be used to access the internet, for example: laptop (65%, 493/839), netbook (51%, 146/839), smartphone (71%, 381/839), iPhone (35%,

128/839), iPod (83%, 502/839), iPad (44%, 140/839) and tablet PC (47%, 83/839). The most common devices used for accessing the internet were laptops (73%, 614/847), iPods (44%, 370/847), desktop computers (38%, 321/847) and smartphones, including iPhones (55%, 464/847). Games consoles such as PlayStation 3, Xbox and Wii were also identified by children and young people as being used to access the internet (21% (181/847), 25% (211/847), and 15% (128/847) respectively).

This is congruent with the findings of the *European Online Grooming Project* (Webster *et al.*, 2012) and Livingstone *et al.*'s (2012) *EU Kids Online* research which also found that access to the internet was becoming more private and more portable. The findings from the present study however, suggest an even higher rate of private use (84%; 710/839) than that found in the EU Kids online study (49%; but this study looked at the UK as a whole) (Livingstone *et al.*, 2012). This may be due to the rural nature of Scotland and provisions of internet access; however, as no systematic rural urban differences were found in the responses of young people in the present study, there may be other variables that account for this difference.

The move towards the use of more private and portable devices to access the internet suggests that it is not enough to concentrate protection and security policies, procedures and tools on home computers. More flexible, updateable and multi-device initiatives which work across a range of devices need to be developed which are accessible to all children and young people regardless of the device and location they use to access the internet. Some attempt at addressing this is currently being made by Isis and ICOP (see Chapter One); however, this is focused on adult agencies rather than the children and young people themselves.

Perceived need for protection

Table 4.1. Respondents' views on safety and uncomfortable situations on the internet:

| | YES | NO |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Do children and young people need to be kept safe online | 89.6% (742) | 10.4% (86) |
| Confident in dealing with something uncomfortable | 71.2% (546) | 28.8% (221) |
| Experiencing something uncomfortable changing behaviour | 61.5% (548) | 38.5% (287) |

As table 4.1 highlights, 90% (742/828) of respondents believed that children and young people need to be kept safe when using the internet. Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to state that children and young people should be kept safe when using the internet ($X^2=6.144$, $df-1$, $p<.05$). Respondents in S2 and S4 (13-15 years) were also less likely than younger and older respondents to believe that this should be the case ($X^2=22.685$, $df-7$, $p<.05$).

The majority of respondents believed that children and young people should be kept safe whilst using the internet with girls and those under 15 especially likely to. They identified dangerous adults and inappropriate content as the main reasons for the need to keep children safe when using the internet. Male respondents were more likely to state that it was safe to give out personal information whilst on the internet, however, the majority of children and young people (89%) stated that personal information should be kept safe. Whilst the majority of respondents in S4 (15 years) stated they did not believe that children and young people needed to be kept safe when online they were less likely than those in S3, 5 and 6 (14, 16 and 17 years) to state that they gave out personal information. These findings were similar to the findings of Livingstone's

(2010, 2012) EU Kids Online research which found that risk taking activities (such as disclosing personal information) appears to increase with age.

The children and young people involved in the present study were very aware of the existence of dangerous adults on the internet and the risks they pose both to young people and their families. They were also familiar with some of the terminology associated with dangerous adults and used words such as 'paedophiles', 'sex offenders', and 'grooming' in their open ended responses, indicating a deeper understanding of the issue as a whole. This terminology was not presented to the young people during any part of the study but was introduced spontaneously by the children and young people. When explaining why children and young people needed to be kept safe when on the internet they discussed the dangers of knowingly or unknowingly talking to strangers or people they had never met before and the presence of paedophiles or '*creeps*' on the internet. This would suggest that they were aware of the deception involved in internet use. Their responses suggested that they were also aware that these dangers were not limited to talking to strangers but could cross over to the 'real' environment and put children, young people and their families at risk of '*being hurt*'.

Six hundred and eighty four responses were provided in answer to an open-ended question about whether and why children and young people needed to be kept safe whilst using the internet. Perceived dangers associated with the internet covered 58% of these responses with the most frequent reason given by respondents being attributed to the dangers of the internet, more specifically the issue of 'stranger danger' and the belief that measures need to be taken to prevent children and young people from talking to strangers:

'They should be kept safe because they could be talking to strangers or people they haven't seen'

Respondents' also cited the risk of being abused or harmed in any way or their family being harmed as a reason for the need for protection, for example:

'well if we dont keep safe we can end up being hurt of others in our families will get hurt'

The importance of protecting children and young people from arranging to meet with strangers was also highlighted by respondents; including their acknowledgment that some individuals can use deception during computer mediated communications or that they might be paedophiles:

'Because if someone you don't know asked if you wanted to go to the park and you thought it was your friend you might be wrong and it could be a big man or something to take you away.'

'Yes as there are many creeps on the internet wanting to beast up children and young people. Many people fall for this 'grooming' and end up hurt'

In order to prevent younger children from viewing something they should not respondents' suggested that accessing inappropriate websites such as pornographic sites (adult and child) was an issue which needed to be addressed. Twelve per cent of respondents identified inappropriate viewing as a reason for keeping children and young people safe; highlighted in the examples below:

'because they might come across things accidentally and would not know what to do.'

'Yes because younger kids could go on inappropriate websites by accident'

'Children can accidentally access child pornography'

This is similar to Livingstone *et al.*'s (2011) finding that 14% cent of 9-16 year olds in their study had encountered pornography on the internet. Livingstone *et al.* (2011) do, however, highlight that the extent of children and young people's exposure should not be exaggerated and that not all children and young people will view exposure in the same sense with the same level (if any) of upset or harm. This issue is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

A small number of respondents (3%) stated that the need for children and young people to be kept safe whilst on the internet *'depends how old they are'*:

'there are men on the internet that can stalk little boys and girls and you never know who is on the internet. I think there should be a even more secure thing for children like 10, as when you reach 15 you are more aware of the problems of men and different situations that you can get in.'

There was a clear understanding amongst respondents' that, whilst children and young people were competent and confident in using technology to access the internet, they were still in need of help. This help, according to respondents', should be directed at the safe usage, navigation and understanding of the dangers associated with the online environment, as well as an increase in awareness-raising (discussed in more detail in Chapters Seven and Eight). Fourteen per cent of respondents believed that children and young people needed help using and navigating the internet. This was not directed at

the operational practices of using a computer but at the safe usage, navigation and understanding of the risks of the online environment, illustrated in comments such as:

'some children don't understand the risk of the internet'

Lack of awareness, needing help to feel safe and knowing how to keep safe when using the internet were also reasons given:

'Because they don't know how it is because it is the internet and people can use fake names and fake ages so they have to be careful'

'Because its important that people can feel safe when in use of the internet and for parents to trust them that they will be safe whilst on it as many things are unsafe and cause bad situations'

From the responses provided, it appeared that respondents rarely identified themselves as being at risk, but directed their observations at other children and young people. This was reflected again in comments which stated that the level of help required was dependent on the age of the child or young person, suggesting that the younger the child the higher the protection and security that is required. Webster *et al.* (2012) similarly found that the young people made it clear to them that education programmes needed to be targeted at younger children as they were more vulnerable, mainly as a result of their desire to get on the internet and gain as many friends as possible.

Why protection is not needed

Respondents who indicated that children and young people did not need to be protected when on the internet gave two reasons. The first was that children and young people had the right to freedom and independence and were responsible individuals who were

capable of deciding for themselves what they could and could not do when on the internet:

'no because we are very responsible for our own use of the internet'

'no because its up to them what they do with their lives and no one can make them do anything.'

This appeared less to do with being protected and more to do with an invasion of their rights and privacy; they wanted to be free to choose which sites they accessed and the activities they participated in when on the internet. They were more concerned about being prevented from choosing the sites they accessed and the activities they participated in than issues of protection and security.

Respondents were however clear in indicating that they were responsible users of the internet and took the notion of responsibility seriously. The emphasis on responsibility lends support to Ost's (2009) suggestion that what is required is a move away from describing children as vulnerable and innocent and move towards empowering children and young people. Providing children and young people with the means to develop avoidance skills could make it harder for potential sex abusers and allow children and young people to increase their responsibility when on the internet.

The second reason was a perception that the internet was not as dangerous as it was made out to be:

'No because the internet isnt as dangerous as people make it out to be'

'no because theres nothing run or hide from'

This could result in young people developing a false sense of security when communicating online or alternatively it could increase their willingness to disclose personal information as they would not realise the danger they could be placing themselves in.

Dealing with uncomfortable situations

When it came to experiencing something uncomfortable or something they thought may be harmful or dangerous, just under three quarters of children and young people stated they would know what to do. Twenty-eight per cent (103/363) of male respondents and 30% (118/404) female respondents indicated they would not know what to do if they were to experience something uncomfortable on the internet. There was no significant difference between male and female respondents in this regard ($X^2=0.65$, $df=1$, $p>.05$). However, younger and older respondents were significantly more likely than respondents in the middle age groups to state they would not know what to do ($X^2=19.110$, $df=7$, $p<.05$).

The main response of the 526 children and young people who made a suggestion about whether they would know how to deal with a situation that made them feel uncomfortable would be to tell an adult, such as parents, teachers, authority figures or older family members which is similar to Livingstone *et al.*'s (2011) EU Kids Online findings. Talking to or telling an adult was a solution provided by 43% of the respondents, for example:

'Speak to parent/carer or teachers or someone you trust speaking to about your situation'

'because i know i can always talk to a responsible adult who will contact the police if needed'

'i would save a screenshot of this situation and tell my mum'

Synovate UK Ltd (2009) also found that young people appeared confident that they would know what to do should they experience any harmful content on the internet. The issue of responsibility appeared in their study with some respondents stating that they were more than capable of navigating the internet on their own and if something was to come up then they would deal with it in their own way. The belief by Synovate's respondents' was that they were educated enough or have been taught about internet safety by their school therefore they knew what to do should they experience something uncomfortable. UKCCIS (2010) also found that children and young people believed in their own ability to keep themselves safe when on the internet.

Not knowing what to do if they were to experience something uncomfortable was the next theme to emerge (16% of respondents). This could be further separated into two issues. The first issue to arise was lack of education, evident in the comments below:

'I havent really been taught what to do. Just the basic things like block them or something, but i would feel uncomfortable and unsafe using the internet from then on'

'how would you deal with it, school doesnt teach us nothing like this'

'We dont get taught what to do when you access a dangerous site'

The second issue to emerge was a concern that they might cause or get into trouble as a result:

'because i dont want to cause trouble'

'i feel if i tell someone they will shout and loses their temper'

'if you dont tell any one the problem wont get bigger'

'I'd be really scared and I would'nt know what to do'

In addition, a small number of respondents (1%) stated they would avoid dealing with the situation because they would not know how to deal with it or were concerned they may escalate the issue:

'I would probably just keep it to myself'

'I dont think it is my place to get involved I should just block them!'

'because if i tried i might make it worse'

'You could do something wrong'

A similar proportion (16%) of respondents to those who stated they did not know what to do felt confident that they were educated enough and would know what to do if they were to experience something uncomfortable on the internet:

'I understand how to look after myself on the internet and can do so.'

'because we have learned it in school and the teachers have shown us all about it'

'Yes, Because I am Very Cautious When it Comes to Stuff Like that And If I Don't Think Somethings Right then I Will Do Something about it'

'I have been told how to deal with it in school by teachers and visitors'

The remaining respondents did not provide a reason for their response.

There appeared to be two different perspectives in the responses provided, which may relate to two different experiences in school, some respondents stated they had not been educated enough whilst others stated that they had been educated enough. This would suggest that perhaps there are inconsistencies in the way internet safety is taught in schools in Scotland.

Changing behaviour in response to uncomfortable experiences

Only three fifths of respondents said that they would change their behaviour in the future if they experienced something on the internet that made them feel uncomfortable; 39% (287/745) stated that they would not change their future behaviour. Male respondents (50%; 172/345) were significantly more likely than female respondents (29%; 115/400) to state they would not change their future behaviour ($X^2=34.839$, $df-1$, $p<.01$) but there were no significant differences in ages and opinions in this regard ($X^2=11.153$, $df-7$, $p>.05$). This supports Christofide *et al.*'s (2011) suggestion that young people who experienced negative consequences were more likely to become aware of the risks of the internet and take more control over the information they disclosed in future.

When asked to explain whether and how they would change their behaviour forty-nine per cent (of 370 responses) suggested that children and young people would become more careful and more cautious in the future:

'You would be more weary on how you were using the internet and what details you are giving people or websites'

'i would be more reluctant to talk to new people and make sure my details are safe if i have to give them'

Sixteen percent said they would avoid the website they were on or avoid the internet altogether:

'not socializing with anyone wouldn't go out with anyone late at night or wouldn't get to know anyone'

'If you ran into a predator or something like that, on the internet it would change what sites/games you went on/played'

Examples of how they would change their behaviour were provided by 22% of respondents, including:

'delete everybody you dont trust or have never talked to'

'you would keep it quiet and might get very crabbit [irritated/annoyed] if anyone says anything about it'

Out of the 49% of respondents who stated that they would change their behaviour, one quarter would hold themselves responsible:

'because it could have been something you have done'

'if i ever experienced something like this i would change the way i acted on the internet because you have already been stupid enough to do it once you wouldnt want to go through all of it again'

Some respondents (6%) stated that experiencing something uncomfortable on the internet would not cause them to change their behaviour in the future:

'It would be soon forgotten'

'i dont think it would change because i am mature on the internet and would NEVER hurt someone'

'Not really. I moderate chat on a popular game, its nothing I have not seen before'

Eighty seven percent (323/370) of those who provided an explanation as to how (if at all) they would change their behaviour, said they would become more cautious when on the internet in the future and that they would be more wary of the sites they visited, more reluctant to talk to new people and less likely to give out personal information. Whilst this is good practice for avoiding child sex abusers, unfortunately, it requires a child or young person to experience something uncomfortable first. These responses were similar to the reasons given as to why children and young people needed to be kept safe when using the internet (inappropriate sites, talking to strangers and giving out personal information). Just over one quarter of respondents discussed how their behaviour would change if they *'ran into a predator'*. These changes were more severe and involved stopping socialising with others or going out at night, deleting people from their social network and avoiding the internet altogether. Previous research has not explored changes in behaviour but has tended to concentrate on how uncomfortable experiences would affect children and young people, and therefore there is no basis of comparison for these findings.

Sharing information on the internet

Ninety-five percent of respondents stated that personal information should be kept safe when on the internet (348 male/406 female), although boys and older (S3, S5 and S6)

young people were more likely to state that it was safe to give out personal information. Issues of personal information were seen as key to safety on the internet, especially accidental or unintentional disclosures:

‘So older men or women try and get personal information out of them, because they are so unaware it will be easy to get the information they need from a younger child’

‘some young people can be online and not know the dangers, and possibly give personal information to strangers’

Of 66 respondents who provided a reason for their choice to keep personal information safe, 55 believed it was better to keep it secret. Two main reasons were given for this decision. The first was for communicating with friends when they knew their privacy settings were set to private, therefore only friends could see the information:

‘its ok to give details if you have a lock which means only your friends can see details’

The second reason was because they *‘dont care what people see’* or do not believe that they are at risk:

‘because if they stay [live] at the other side of the world, im pretty sure that person wont travel all around the world just to get you’

In giving their reasons as to why personal information should be kept secret, children and young people’s responses could be divided into three main themes:

- Using personal information to trace your location (32%)
- No guarantee of who will gain access to personal information (25%)

- Dangers and risks associated with giving out personal information (22%).

Using personal information to trace your location

That personal information could be used to trace people was given as a reason for keeping it secret:

'because just say you told them your address they could come and vandalise your house'

'so people dont come to your school and kidnapp you'

'Because theyre are some amount of creeps out there who wouldnt think twice in jumping into their van to come find you. So no-one can phone you up,visit you or pedo you up'

No guarantee of who will gain access to personal information

The lack of guarantees about who could access the information was another concern:

'Because when it's out on the internet anyone can read it.'

'I think this because you never know who cold be reading this information it could be a dangerous adult'

'because you dont want strangers knowing about your personal details because you dont know if they are telling the truth about them so you should keep it a secret'

Dangers and risks associated with giving out personal information

Respondents also provided responses which referred to specific dangers and risks associated with giving out personal information on the internet, including putting themselves and their family at risk of harm, for example:

'because you are setting your family in danger includeing you'

Another identified risk was being exposed to potential abusers:

'incase a 'dangerous' adult seen it and causes you problems'

'because of sex offenders'

The danger of having their computer hacked by others was also highlighted by respondents:

'becuase if they hack you or read some of your stuff'

Finally being exposed to cyberbullying was identified as a risk:

'So harassing people cannot bully you'

Disclosure of information

When asked what information they did share with online strangers, responses covered personal information, social information and photographs, as indicated by table 4.2:

**Table 4.2: Personal information that respondents stated that they had shared
online by gender**

| | Male | Female |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| Your full name | 3.4 % 27 | 3.7 % 29 |
| Your home address | 1 % 8 | 0 % 0 |
| Your home telephone number | 0.5 % 4 | 0 % 0 |
| Your mobile telephone number | 0.6 % 5 | 0.8 % 6 |
| Your email address | 2.2 % 17 | 2.9 % 23 |
| Details of your friends and family | 1 % 8 | 0.5 % 4 |
| The name of the school you attend | 2.4 % 19 | 1.4 % 11 |
| The name of any clubs you attend | 2.2 % 17 | 1.3 % 10 |
| Your plans for the evening | 2.5 % 20 | 2.9 % 23 |
| Your friends or family's plans for the evening | 1.3 % 10 | 1 % 8 |
| Your plans for the weekend | 1.8 % 14 | 2.7 % 21 |
| Your friends or family's plans for the weekend | 1 % 8 | 1 % 8 |
| If you are going to be home alone | 0.8 % 6 | 0.6 % 5 |
| Photos of yourself | 1.9 % 15 | 2.9 % 23 |
| Photos of your friends or family | 1.3 % 10 | 1.8 % 14 |

Personal

The majority of respondents stated that personal information should be kept safe when using the internet (95%; 754) but there was a small, but nonetheless concerning number of respondents who indicated that this should not be the case (5%; 40). Male respondents (2% 8/371) were significantly more likely than female respondents (0%

0/414) to state that they have given out their home address ($X^2=9.019$, $df-1$, $p<.05$). Male respondents (1% 4/372) were also significantly more likely than female respondents (0% 0/414) to state that they had given out their home telephone number ($X^2=4.474$, $df-1$, $p<.05$). There was no significant difference between respondents' gender and claiming to have given out their name, mobile telephone number, email address or sharing family details with online strangers.

There was a significant effect of respondents' age and their claim to have given out their name to online strangers, with older young people significantly more likely to state that they had done so than younger people ($X^2=44.899$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). Older young people were significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they had given out their email address to online strangers ($X^2=69.299$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). Older respondents were also significantly more likely than younger ones to indicate that they had shared family details with online strangers ($X^2=27.663$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). There was no significant difference between respondents' age and whether they claimed to share their address, home telephone number, and mobile telephone number with online strangers.

In summary, only a minority of respondents stated that they shared personal information. Of those who claimed to have given out names, addresses and phone numbers, male respondents were more likely to do so.

Social

Again, although only a small proportion of the total, there were some young people who indicated they had given out names of their school (30; 4%), clubs (27; 3%), shared evening plans (43; 5% own plans; 18; 2% friends and families plans) and weekend plans (35; 4% own plans; 16; 2% friends and families plans) and whether or not they

would be home alone (11; 1%) with online strangers. There was no significant difference between male and female respondents in regard to these findings.

Older young people were significantly more likely than the younger ones to state that they had given out the name of their school to online strangers ($X^2=33.546$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). Older respondents were also significantly more likely than younger respondents to claim they had shared their plans for the evening with online strangers ($X^2=86.836$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). In addition, respondents in the older year groups were also significantly more likely than respondents in the younger year groups to claim they had shared their friend's and family's plans for the evening with online strangers ($X^2=46.660$, $df=7$, $p<.01$).

Older respondents were also significantly more likely than younger respondents' to claim they had shared their own weekend plans with online strangers ($X^2=102.645$, $df=7$, $p<.01$) and their friends' and family's weekend plans with online strangers ($X^2=40.482$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). Finally, respondents in S2, 4, 5 and 6 were significantly more likely than respondents in the other year groups (10 – 12 and 14 year olds) to state that they had given out information about whether they were going to be home alone ($X^2=21.580$, $df=7$, $p<.05$). There was no significant difference between respondents' age and claiming to have shared the names of clubs they attend to online strangers ($X^2=6.090$, $df=7$, $P>.05$).

In summary, only a minority of respondents stated that they shared personal information, but of those that did gave out the names of their (and their friend's and family's) school or their evening and weekend plans, older young people were more likely to do so.

Photographs

As with Personal and Social, although only a small proportion of the total, there were some young people who indicated they had shared photographs of themselves (38; 5%) and their friends and family (24; 3%). There was no significant difference between male and female respondents in regard to these findings.

Older young people were significantly more likely than the younger ones to have stated that they had shared photographs when on the internet ($X^2=99.184$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). Older young people were also significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they had shared photographs of friends and family with online strangers ($X^2=98.846$, $df=7$, $p<.01$).

In summary, only a minority stated that they shared photographs with online strangers, but among those who did give out photographs of themselves or friends and family, older year groups were more likely to do so.

According to Webster *et al.*'s (2012) findings from the European Online Grooming Project, acceptable social network profile content included name, gender, birthday, name of the town you live in and '*information about your life*' (p15). Unacceptable information included personal addresses and telephone numbers. Responses for the current study regarding the personal information they gave fell into three themes *personal*, *social* and *photographs*. Almost all children and young people stated that they had given out their name, home address and telephone number to friends and family when online; however, there were also those who were willing to disclose this information to online strangers and friends they had never met face-to-face before (see Chapter Six for an explanation of the difference between 'strangers' and 'friends they have never met before'). Males stated they were more likely than females to disclose

this information to strangers and those they have never met before when online. Levels of disclosure for mobile telephone numbers, email addresses and family details were similar between males and females. The findings indicated a higher willingness to disclose such information was reported in the present study than in the European Online Grooming Project.

Reported levels of disclosure for 'friends they have never met face-to-face before' was more than double the level of disclosure for 'strangers' with regards to the personal information discussed previously. Older children were more likely than younger children to disclose personal information, although this was in relation to name, email address and family details rather than giving out addresses and mobile and home telephone numbers. A small number of respondents believed that as long as privacy settings were set to the highest level and they had alternative forms of protection in place, then it was safe to give out personal information when communicating with friends. Finally, there were some who believed that it did not matter what information was disclosed as there was no real danger, the belief of respondents being that people were not willing to travel to find someone based on the information disclosed. The level of disclosure of a child or young person will impact on how a potential abuser communicates with a potential child victim, therefore the more information that is disclosed the easier it is for a potential sex abuser to work through the first two stages of the cycle of cybergrooming discussed in Chapter Two.

When it comes to disclosing personal information of a social nature, names of schools, clubs, evening and weekend plans (both their own and those of their friends and families) and whether or not they would be home alone were all reportedly disclosed by a number of children and young people to strangers or people they had never met before when online, regardless of whether they were male or female. Older children were

again more likely than younger children to state that they had disclosed this information. This, again, is similar to Livingstone *et al.*'s (2011) findings that older children reported that they participated in more risk taking activities. As with the disclosure of personal information, levels of disclosure for 'friends they have never met face-to-face' before was double the level of disclosure for 'strangers'.

Disclosing photographs of self and friends and family also occurred amongst a small number of children and young people both male and female, with older young people the most likely to state that they had disclosed these images. Again the disclosure levels for friends who have never been met face-to-face before was double the level of disclosure for online strangers.

The reported disclosure of personal information would appear to be a deliberate or conscious act by respondents who were aware of what they were giving out and who they were giving it out to. Seen with their comments that children and young people should be kept safe when on the internet, because they may inadvertently give out personal information or because of a lack of awareness of the dangers, these responses do tend to support the suggestion that young people seem to associate this risk with others rather than themselves.

Where information is shared

Overall, 51% (403/790) of respondents stated that they would share personal information in private chat rooms. Female respondents (56% 247/415) were significantly more likely than male respondents (42% 156/375) to share personal information in this context ($X^2=25.309, df=1, p<.01$).

Male respondents (18% 68/375), however, were significantly more likely than female respondents (10% 40/415) to claim to have given out personal information in public chat rooms ($X^2=12.045$, $df-1$, $p<.05$) and during online gaming (40% 148/375 (6% 24/415) ($X^2=131.227$, $df-1$, $p<.01$). There was no significant difference between male (40% 148/375) and female (43% 180/415) respondents as to whether they reported having given out personal information on social networking sites.

Younger respondents were significantly more likely than older young people to state that they had given out personal information in the context of online gaming ($X^2=14.298$, $df-7$, $p<.05$), whereas older respondents were significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they had given out personal information through social networking sites ($X^2=116.835$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). There was no significant age difference in respondents' claims to have given out personal information in private chat rooms ($X^2=12.229$, $df-7$, $p>.05$) or public or non-private chat rooms ($X^2=6.784$, $df-7$, $p>.05$).

Children and young people were asked if they had ever added details of online strangers through instant messaging, such as adding them to their contacts or friends list. Out of a total of 790 respondents (375 male/415 female) 39% (123 male/186 female) stated that they had done so. Female respondents (45% 186/415) were significantly more likely than male respondents (33% 123/375) to state that they had added details of online strangers through instant messaging ($X^2=11.950$, $df-1$, $p<.05$). The older the respondent the more likely they were to report that they had done so ($X^2=54.303$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). Female respondents (60% 250/415) were also significantly more likely than male respondents (42% 158/375) to state that they had added online strangers' details to their social networking site ($X^2=25.865$, $df-1$, $p<.01$). Older respondents were again significantly more likely than those in the younger year groups to claim that they had added online strangers details to their social networking site ($X^2=40.118$, $df-7$, $p<.01$).

There was no significant difference between male (5% 19/375) and female (7% 27/415) respondents with respect to whether they stated to have received emails, messages, or photographs from online strangers ($X^2=0.744$, $df-1$, $p>.05$). Older respondents, however, were again significantly more likely than younger ones to claim to have done so ($X^2=63.223$, $df-7$, $p<.01$).

A number of children and young people (6%) stated that they plan to share the above information when on the internet in the future. The difference in disclosure levels between those classed as 'online strangers' and those classed as 'friends I have never met face-to-face before' would suggest that children and young people clearly distinguish between the two (discussed in Chapter Six). As found by Davidson and Gottschalk (2011), interacting with strangers through social networking sites, instant messenger and chat facilities appeared to be classed as normal behaviour, rather than risk-taking behaviour, which children and young people plan to continue. This would suggest there is a difference in opinion about what is classed as risk-taking behaviour online between adults and children and young people which would go some way towards explaining why current safety measures appear ineffective. This is also supported by Christofides *et al.* (2011; 2012), who found that young people were more likely than adults to disclose personal information on Facebook.

Personal information was more likely to be disclosed during private chat, however just over half claimed to share this information during social networking with 27% stating it would be during online gaming and 17% stating it would be in public chat rooms. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to disclose this information during private chats; however, this was reversed for public chats with males more likely than females to disclose this information. Male respondents were also more likely than female respondents to disclose information whilst playing games

online but this could be because males were more likely than females to be playing online games which involved multiplayer (88% males, 12% females) using 'chat' facilities (allowing for information to be disclosed intentionally or otherwise). Older respondents stated they were more likely to give out personal information on social networking sites whilst younger respondents were more likely to disclose information during online gaming. This may be explained by the findings of May-Chahal *et al.* (2012) that children and young people based their interpretations of whether or not they were speaking to strangers on the internet through the content of the communication, such as discussing similar interests or still being at school (see Chapter Eight for a more detailed discussion). In order for this to be achieved some level of disclosure needs to take place, putting children and young people in a vulnerable position since to withhold information risks losing a potential friend.

Despite the levels of disclosure discussed previously, the majority of children and young people involved in the present study were aware of the dangers associated with providing personal information when on the internet. Whilst there are numerous potential dangers related to personal information on the internet such as those associated with identity theft, the majority of comments provided by respondents related to dangerous adults. The ability to be traced and have dangerous adults turn up at their house or school was one main concern as was the fact that there is no guarantee as to who is being communicated with. Respondents seemed to be aware that once information was put on the internet there was the potential for anyone to read it including dangerous adults and strangers. This could potentially lead to children and young people being '*pedo'd*' as they believe that dangerous adults and '*creeps*' would not think twice before coming to find them. They also highlighted their awareness that disclosing personal information not only put them at risk but also their friends and

family. This could be through an invasion of privacy, such as having their computer hacked and information read, to more serious dangers that are present ‘*because of sex offenders*’. Further research is required to investigate if the children and young peoples’ opinions of child sex abusers are accurate or, like Burn and Willet (2004) suggested, they have skewed perceptions based on adult emphasis and misrepresentation by the media.

An additional issue which was highlighted and related to disclosure of personal information was that of cyberbullying. Although discussed by a small number of respondents (27) it can be just as unwanted and harmful and it was believed that disclosing personal information was providing ammunition for further cyberbullying to take place. Livingstone *et al.* (2011) found that six per cent of the children in their study, which involved 25 countries across Europe, had experienced cyberbullying and that children and young people coped reasonably well with cyberbullying. The children and young people in the current study only briefly mention cyberbullying and made no mention of coping strategies, other than to comment that it did not really affect them and that they would ignore it and shrug it off.

The differences in age and gender, in relation to levels of disclosure and sharing of information, lend support to Peter *et al.*’s (2005) findings. Interacting and participating in the online environment is a complex activity which differs between children and young people. It is therefore impractical to treat all children and young people as the same when protecting and educating them about internet safety.

Adding and meeting with strangers

When it comes to going on to meet online strangers face-to-face, this can happen in three ways: with family, with friends or on their own. Female respondents (13%

52/415) were significantly more likely than male respondents (6% 22/375) to state that they had gone on to meet online strangers face-to-face whilst with family members ($X^2=10.303$, $df-1$, $p<.05$). There was no significant difference between male and female respondents with respect to whether they had met online strangers face-to-face whilst on their own (1% 5/375 male; 2% 10/415 female) or with friends (13% 47/375 male; 13% 53/415 female).

Older young people were, however, significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they had met online strangers face-to-face whilst with friends ($X^2=130.554$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). Older young people were also significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they had met strangers face-to-face whilst with their family ($X^2=81.558$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). There was no significant difference between respondents' age and whether they stated that they had met online strangers face-to-face whilst on their own ($X^2=6.013$, $df-7$, $p>.05$). This would support findings reported by Staksrud and Livingstone (2009).

Older children and young women were more likely than younger children and young men to have added details of strangers on to their instant messaging and social networking accounts. Older children and young people were also more likely to have received emails, messages and photographs from strangers in comparison to younger ones (the issue of strangers is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six).

These findings contradict respondents' previous comments about the need to keep children and young people safe when on the internet because arranging to meet with strangers is dangerous: *'you thought it was your friend you might be wrong and it could be a big man or something to take you away'*.

Worryingly, a larger number of respondents (out of 542 total responses) stated that they intended to add details of strangers to their instant messaging (50%) and social network accounts (37%), receive emails, messages and photographs (34%) from strangers and meet with strangers face-to-face (14% on own, 16% with friends and 22% with family) in the future in comparison to those who stated they had done so already.

Respondents claimed that personal information should be kept secret online and that children and young people should be kept safe when using the internet. A number of young people reported, however, that they were disclosing personal information and participating in risky activities, such as meeting strangers face-to-face. Further research is required in order to gain a greater depth of understanding of what children and young people class as personal information and what they believe should and should not be disclosed as well as an understanding of what children and young people believe to be acceptable behaviour when online.

Protection and security suggestions

Respondents were happy to provide advice and suggestions for protecting children and young people on the internet. From the 630 responses to the question about what one thing they thought could be done to keep children safe when on the internet 4 main themes emerged:

- Reporting, promoting and preventing (39%)
- Adult supervision (21%)
- Blocking sites (17%)
- Age restrictions (8%)
-

Reporting, promoting and preventing

A large number of children and young people (248/630) provided suggestions as to what could be done to keep children safe when on the internet. These included providing a method of reporting information to specialist websites, for example:

'They could get weekly updates from they website asking them to tell the truth about how they feel on the site'

'That on every website with games or messaging bits that there is a report button either taking you to CEOP or something'

Suggestions were also made as to how to promote and highlight internet safety to children and young people, which included providing a solution as to how to inform children that the websites they are on are safe:

'grt people in to schools to talk about internet saftey and how to keep you safe'

the goverment could put a tag on each website saying if it is suitable for children or not'

Preventing dangerous individuals or potential abusers from accessing and using the internet was also suggested:

'Anybody that has ever been arrested for being a stalker should not be allowed internet access unless supervised'

'Catching pedophiles, and giving them a life time ban from the internet'

Adult supervision

Being supervised by adults was another method for keeping children safe on the internet given by several respondents (130/630). This method was split into two approaches. The first approach was supervision by parents who were seen as responsible for ensuring the safety of their children when using the internet:

'Convince adults to keep there children safe. E.g- watch over what there doing or block sites that aren't aproprate for there ages'

'I think more parents need to take responsibility for children on the internet'

One respondent did acknowledge that, for parents, supervising children on the internet is not as easy as it seems, making the following comment:

'You cant well u can put parental controls on and watch when they are on the internet but what about a friends computer or their smart phone'

The second approach was supervision by the government or specialists in computer technology who were seen as responsible for monitoring the internet and blocking dangerous site:

'government should make sure they dont go on the websites and should block them'

'there should be a person form each game company wathing speetch and behaviour of game charcters'

Blocking sites

Blocking children from accessing inappropriate websites was another solution put forward by respondents, for example:

'to band some websites that can make you meet strangers or share personal information to strangers'

'band rude and innapropriate sites'

Again, one respondent acknowledge that it is not as easy as it seems to keep the internet safe for children by commenting:

'theres nothing really because if you take all the wedsites away thawt should be banned to some people,people will just make more'

In addition to blocking inappropriate websites for children, blocking adults from accessing children's websites was suggested, as seen in the example below:

'Blocking dangerous adults from kids sites and they should ask how old they really are and they should put they're e-mail adress and the police should track them down and the should be sent to jail'

Age restrictions

Putting age restriction on games or websites and also putting restrictions on the age at which a child may access the internet were put forward:

'Put restrictions on the websites young children should not view, That are not age appropriate for them.'

'more restrictions on online games, which would put them into games with people that are in their age group'

'I think they could set an age when children are allowed to be on the internet like the of 12'

The remainder of the respondents stated that they did not know what could be done to keep children safe when on the internet.

Advice for younger children

Finally, children and young people were asked what advice about internet safety they would give to a younger child. Their responses (642 in total) could be separated into five themes:

- Only use appropriate websites (33%)
- Online stranger danger (31%)
- Adult supervision (11%)
- Keep personal information private (9%)
- Reporting anything they are unsure of and keeping themselves safe (6%)

Only use appropriate website

The main piece of internet safety advice children and young people would give to younger children is to avoid inappropriate websites and only go on websites or use games which are appropriate for their age, seen in the following comments:

'Don't have any Social Networking Suites until the legal age because a lot of you think you know but really you don't know how dangerous it really is...'

'dont use chat roulette, keep away from away from youtube, stay of facebook twitter they be evil'

'I would tell them to steer away from such sites such as chat roulette or other anonymous video/chat sites. Only go to places you know have a good community such as DeviantArt or Youtube, and above all don't do anything stupid.'

'stay on kids websites and not adults websites'

'make sure thta you are the right age to be on what you are going onto and it's safe'

Age restricted websites were believed to be beneficial for younger children and something which could be put in place to prevent access to inappropriate websites. There were also those who believed that restricting the age at which children and young people could go on the internet may also be beneficial. Interestingly, it was older children who suggested age restrictions and were happy to identify those who needed protection but did not see themselves as being in any danger.

Online stranger danger

One piece of internet safety advice children and young people would give to a younger child is to only speak to people they knew when on the internet:

'Do not go on a website you dont know about. do not talk to someone you dont know. do not go on camera with people you don't know'

'dont talk to and people you dont know over the internet many people have been badly hurt, conned or murdered because of talking to people the dont know over the internet! :-('

In addition respondents would advise children and young people to only accept friend requests on social networking sites from people they knew:

'I Would Say to Them that If Anybody You Don't Know Tries to Speak to You or Sends You a Friend Request then Show your Parents/Carers and if They Don't Know Them then Don't Respond Back and Block them'

Children and young people would also warn younger children about meeting with strangers they have met on the internet, evident in the comments below:

'never meet up with anyone'

'not to meet up with anyone you do not know!'

'Don't meet up with strangers they may kill you!!!'

Adult supervision

Allowing their parents to help keep them safe is another piece of internet safety advice:

'Ask your parents/carers if you are not sure about something or just come off and ask your parents/carers permission to go on the thing that you want to go on.'

'lisiin to your mum and dad'

'listen to your elders becuase they know what they are talking about'

In addition to parental supervision, trusting alternative adults such as teachers to keep them safe on the internet was safety advice suggested by respondents:

'stick to what you usually do dont go exploring on the internet unless you are told to by an adult or a teacher you trust'

'that they should all ways have a adults supervision whistle on the internet because they dont know what could happen to them'

Adult supervision can be achieved through visual monitoring, installing software, blocking sites and taking more responsibility for the activities their children participate in when online. Some respondents did acknowledge that this was only a limited form of protection as parents could only monitor devices in the home; they could not monitor devices outside the home or mobile devices which can be taken and used in a number of locations.

Supervision by the government or government bodies was an alternative solution for providing protection and security to children and young people. The government was seen as holding responsibility over access to and blocking of websites and believed to be in a position to control what sites could be accessed by children and young people, alternatively, blocking adults from accessing children's websites and controlling what websites adults can access. There was an understanding, however, that it was not as easy as it sounded and that in the majority of cases when a website was blocked or taken down another one was made to replace it, making it a vicious circle. In addition, it was believed that manufacturers of online games (specifically multiplayer games) should monitor the speech and behaviour of their game characters in order to better protect young people who go online to play. Children and young people's opinions about the role of government will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Keep personal information private

An additional piece of internet safety advice respondents would give to younger children would be to keep their personal details private and not to share any private information over the internet, especially with people they do not know:

'Dont ever give your address, phone number, or any personal info over the internet'

'don't put any person information on the internet about yourself that you wouldn't like strangers to know'

'Dont tell anyone you dont know your personal details like name and where you live'

Reporting anything they are unsure of and keeping themselves safe

A small number of respondents (36/642) would point out to a younger child the importance of reporting anything they find that they are unsure of or that makes them feel uncomfortable:

'always tell an adult if you are unsure abot something because there is some nasy people in the world'

'To tell me if they were getting bullied or harrassed on facebook or other any sites like that'

'Dont go on anything if you think that it doesnt look right and if you do discover something innapropriate then come out of it immediatly and tell and adult'

The remaining respondents did not provide any suggestions for advice they would give to younger children about internet safety.

Preventing access to the internet

Preventing dangerous adults or paedophiles from accessing the internet was another key issue raised by respondents. Giving lifetime bans to paedophiles and anyone arrested as being a stalker (unless supervised) were the main suggestions provided for helping provide protection and security to children and young people on the internet. This is something that CEOP (2013) attempts to address with their intelligence faculty which has the ability to track registered sex offenders, including those who travel abroad. It has no way, however, of preventing them from accessing the internet.

A number of alternative solutions which are not currently available were also provided by the respondents. These involved communicating with children and young people by contacting them on a regular basis asking for their involvement in researching websites, for example, asking them to provide a weekly report on the websites they have visited and what they thought of these sites and how they felt about being on the sites. This could provide help in developing a second suggestion which was to put a government tag on safe websites which will allow for children and young people to instantly know if the site they are on is safe or not.

When asked what advice about internet safety they would give to younger children all comments related to the issues discussed previously. The main advice related to accessing appropriate websites and stranger danger: telling younger children not to talk to people they do not know when on the internet, not to use webcams with people they do not know and not to give out personal information to people they do not know. Being careful about who to accept a friend request from when on social networking

sites was also a popular piece of advice: only accepting friend requests from people they know and have met is the advice that would be given as not to do so could lead to someone being '*conned or murdered*'. A strong piece of advice which was portrayed in comments with capital letters and exclamation marks to emphasise the point was to never meet up with anyone you do not know. The above advice seems important, relevant and almost common sense. When taken with the described levels of disclosure and meeting with strangers, however, it does not seem to be a message which is getting through to all children and young people. More research is required with children and young people in order to gain an understanding of why these messages are effective for some but disregarded by others.

Reporting anything children are not sure of to their parents or teachers and making sure they have adult supervision was also a popular piece of advice (which is contradictory to some of the responsibility comments discussed previously). This is tied in with advising younger children to only go on age appropriate sites and not to have a social networking site until old enough.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the children and young people highlighted their eagerness and capability to provide detailed and relevant suggestions and solutions on how children and young people can be better protected when using the internet, which indicates their willingness and desire to participate in research involving issues directly relevant or related to them. This reflects Ost's (2009) belief that children needed to be listened to in order to inform adults about how they should be perceived and understood. The present study adds to the body of research involving children and young people and includes both qualitative and quantitative data with no adult moderation of responses.

As new technology becomes the dominant tool used by the majority of children and young people in Scotland, it is necessary to educate them in a way that is tailored to their age and technological competence. If we were to apply Vygotsky's (1978) theory of *Zone of Proximal Development* and the *Scaffolding* process (discussed in Chapter Two) to children and young people's internet use we would not only develop their interpersonal skills but also provide them with empowerment and the ability to use the internet with confidence. Rather than using adults to provide them with assistance it may be more beneficial to use peers, with more distant adult support. This would enable children and young people to be supported by those who better understood their perspective. Younger people are raised in a technological environment, therefore their knowledge and behaviour on the internet is different from adults and requires a different approach. Using Vygotsky's theory to guide online education may also help young people develop the skills necessary to break the cycle of cybergrooming currently used by child sex abusers.

This chapter has highlighted that there are some discrepancies between what children have to say, the advice they would give to other children and what behaviour they participate in. There seems to be an understanding that children and young people need to be kept safe whilst online. There also seems to be an issue developing around feelings of responsibility, with young people believing they are responsible individuals who can monitor their own safety when using the internet. There are a small number who are still willing to disclose personal information now and in the future and who are willing to share this information with strangers and people they have never met before. Overall they have provided some valuable information, opinions and advice on how we can protect children and young people who access the internet.

Key Findings:

- Ninety percent of respondents believed that children and young people need to be protected when using the internet and ninety-five percent of respondents stated that personal information should be kept safe when on the internet
- Dangerous adults and inappropriate content were the main reasons given for the need to keep children safe when using the internet.
- Those respondents who did not believe young people needed to be kept safe when using the internet cited the right to freedom and independence and that they were responsible individuals as their rationale.
- Four hundred and three respondents stated that they would share personal information in private chat rooms.
- Three hundred and twenty eight stated they would share personal information in social networking sites.
- Fifteen respondents claimed to have gone on to meet online strangers face-to-face.
- Twenty-eight per cent of male respondents and thirty percent of female respondents indicated they would not know what to do if they were to experience something uncomfortable on the internet.
- Only three fifths of respondents said that they would change their behaviour in the future if they experienced something on the internet that made them feel uncomfortable.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND STRANGERS

This chapter presents and discusses issues which relate to the concept of ‘strangers’ and whether or not children and young people involved in this study believe there is a difference between face-to-face strangers in the environment and strangers on the internet. In addition it looks at the respondents’ opinions about whether or not there is a difference between online strangers and online people that have never been met. Tables presenting the detailed percentages of findings can be found in Appendix C.

Online strangers and face-to-face strangers

Just over half of the respondents (53%; 195 males/200 females) stated that there was no difference between ‘strangers on the internet’ and ‘strangers outside in the real environment’ and just under half that there was (47%; 164 males/188 females), with little difference between males and females ($X^2=0.575$, $df-1$, $p>.05$). Older young people were more likely to perceive a difference between strangers on the internet and strangers in the real environment than younger people, however this difference was not significant ($X^2= 9.056$, $df-7$, $p>.05$), see table 1.2 below:

Table 5.1. Respondents’ views on whether or not they believe there is a difference between ‘strangers’ and ‘people they have never met before’ on the internet and those outside in the real environment by gender and school year:

Table 5.1: Respondents views on difference between online and offline strangers

| | YES | NO |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 21.9 % | 26.1 % |
| Female | 25.2 % | 26.8 % |
| P6 | 4.3 % | 5.4 % |
| P7 | 6.3 % | 9.2 % |
| S1 | 7.5 % | 7.9 % |
| S2 | 17.4 % | 21.3 % |
| S3 | 4.7 % | 3.2 % |
| S4 | 3.4 % | 2.5 % |
| S5 | 2.1 % | 2.1 % |
| S6 | 1.5% | 1.1 % |

In response to an open-ended question which allowed children and young people to elaborate on why (if at all) they believed there to be a difference between strangers on the internet and strangers outside in the real environment several key themes emerged out of the 301 responses:

- Distinction between ‘strangers’ and ‘people never met before’
- Distinction between ‘strangers’ and unknown people who share the same social circles
- Distinction between ‘strangers’ and ‘people known but never met before’
- No difference between ‘strangers’ online and offline

Distinction between ‘strangers’ and ‘people never met before’

The first key theme to emerge was the apparent distinction that respondents drew between ‘strangers’ and ‘people they have never met before’ which was alluded to in 14% of responses. This first distinction involved the difference between strangers and

people they had never met before but 'knew' through friends or family who have met them. For example:

'because you don't know strangers but people you have never met can be cousins or pen pals.'

'people i have never met before means my friend knows them and have met them and they stay near by. and strangers mean that they dont live near by and my friends have never heard of or met them'

Distinction between 'strangers' and unknown people who share the same social circles

The second distinction was between strangers and people the respondents had never met before, but who shared the same social circles as them and were likely to be met at some point (and some of their friends may already know them or have met them):

'There is lots of differences. A stranger would be someone you have never spoke to and never heard of. I have people on my facebook that I dont know but there not strangers if I know they go to my school and they know people I know.'

'well the people you have never met before maybe youve spokento them on facebook or something whilst you were with another friend so you know they cant exactly harm you,and its likely for you to meet them out anyway'

Distinction between ‘strangers’ and ‘people known but never met before’

The final distinction was between complete strangers whom the respondents did not know in any way and people they had never have met face-to-face but still claimed to know them and be friends with them, illustrated in the example below:

‘People you never met before : you might of never met them in real life but you know who they are and all that and like you know them and there a friend to you but youv never been face - to - face with them , stranger : stranger is completly diffrent , because if its a stranger you DONT know them never seen them never been facetoface with them dont know there name or anything’

Those children and young people who did make a distinction between strangers in the online environment and strangers in the outside environment indicated four key differences:

- Pretend to be someone else (13%)
- Worse in real life (11%)
- Threat or danger (10%)
- Being able to ‘see’ them’ (7%)

Pretend to be someone else

Children and young people also pointed out that when using the internet people could pretend to be anyone they want to be. This could involve pretending to be a different person, different sex, different age and different personality - anything they need to be in order to befriend someone:

'on the internet it can seem more appealing if a stranger was to pose as a 13 year old and friend someone'

'they could be pretending to be your age but could be 50'

'just cause you meet them in a game doesn't mean there the same in real life'

'because strangers are people you don't know they could be lying and may not be who you thought they were'

'online every stranger you meet claims to be a U.S. marine'

'well outside you are seeing the people face to face and you kind of know what they look like but i would never speak to one and on the internet the stranger could be pretending to be someone else'

Worse in real life

Some children and young people did not view strangers on the internet as dangerous and claimed that it was only strangers who were outside in the 'real' environment who could be a danger:

'outside they try to kill you inside they try to see you naked'

'in the environment your life is exposed on the internet your details are exposed'

'It's easier to talk to people as they cannot do anything to you'

'Because on the internet the worst thing they can do is make a bad comment about you but in real life they can do something worse'

'you are not face to face so no danger can be caused'

Threat or danger

Children and young people also acknowledged that strangers on the internet could be a threat or danger to them. Some respondents acknowledged that the internet provided for more security for dangerous adults:

'People sometimes on the internet i feel are more dangerous because they can sometimes get away with more'

'can be harmful or dangerous to us, but i suppose maybe on the internet, people could give out false information so it might make it a bit more dangerous'

'People are more dangerous on the internet as they do not need to show their faces and they can do the same bad things to other people.'

Other respondents indicated their understanding that strangers could, potentially, be both physically and verbally harmful to you and that it was not restricted to the internet (even though the communication may have started there):

'you dont know the person that well so they could harm you and make you feel uncomfturbale'

'Yes because they could be very mean and tell people that you dont know and have never meant before.'

'they still might still hurt you'

'They might hunt you down.....(you don't want that do you)'

In addition to this respondents were clear in their responses when identifying the type of threat or danger associated with children and young people communicating with strangers on the internet, as seen in the following comments:

'they could also be a paedophile'

'because some people are pedoes'

'they can be pedothiles'

Respondents also referred to the virtual (non-physical) nature of the online environment:

'on the internet cannot reach though a computer'

'they can only say words on internet but can physically hurt you in the real world'

'It is easier to talk to them and they cannot physically harm you as they cannot touch you'

'On the internet they don't pose much of a physical risk.'

'because online being verbaly harmed is not as bad as bieng phisicaly harmed'

Being able to 'see' them'

Another distinction to be made was the ability to physically see a person in the outside environment, removing the possibility for the stranger to hide or lie about their age or physical characteristics, as seen in comments such as:

'In reality, you can see who someone is (age, gender, personality to an extent, etc.), whereas on the internet there is usually no way of telling for certain'

'unlike the internet ,outside you take in all of their features and you can tell if they're trouble'

'Strangers in the real world, you meet their human body and real personality, in the internet, they are just an data stream with a digital identity.'

'Online strangers could be anyone of any age. People who are strangers in the real world you can see so you know who they are and that they are. Like by saying they are 20. you can see that they are 20 when online they could pretend to be 20 when they aren't.'

As well as the lack of available physical features of strangers on the internet respondents appeared to be aware of the global nature of the internet:

'the peopel on the internet could be from a different counrty'

'beacuse people on the internet could be from a different country and they could also be a peadophile'

No difference between 'strangers' online and offline

Some children and young people believed there to be no difference between strangers in the outside environment and strangers in the online environment (11%):

'I think it's just the same because I could meet someone on the street and they could lie and I wouldn't know'

*'i think there both the same because you have never met them before
and you don't know what they are like or ehat they like to do'*

*'They are still strangers whether you are face to face or on the
internet'*

'it is the same because you have no idea who the person is.'

*'I think it's just the same because I could meet someone on the street
and they could lie and I wouldn't know.'*

'Cause u still shouldnt talk to them either way :('

'There both dangerous'

'they can all be risky'

The children and young people indicated that the issue of strangers on the internet was complex and they were not as easily identifiable as strangers in the outside 'real' environment. Whilst there was not a large difference between those who claimed that there was a difference between strangers on the internet and strangers outside in the real environment and those who claimed there was no such difference, older children were more likely than younger children to state that there was a difference. Their explanation of who was classed as a stranger, however, differed.

Respondents were very forthcoming in providing explanations as to why (if at all) they believed there to be a difference between online strangers and outside real environment strangers, providing further support to theorists such as Corsoro (2005) and Woolfson *et al.* (2010) who see children as creative social agents with clear views. The first distinction to be made was the difference between strangers and friends or people that

have never been met before. Strangers were classed as people they did not know in any way, however, there were those people who had never been met before but were 'known' through friends and family, such as relatives, pen pals or friends of friends. In addition, people who had never been met before would live nearby and friends would have heard of them or may have met them therefore they were not classed as strangers; who were believed not to live nearby and be people friends had never heard of before.

'People who had never been met before' was also used to describe online friends who respondents may not have met before but they were aware of them. They were people who went to the same school as them (but were in a different class or year) or they had communicated with online at the same time as a friend (group conversations or shared postings). These were people who were likely to be met out in the street and were not believed to pose any risk of harm. This may go some way toward explaining the difference in disclosure levels explained in Chapter Four. The main distinction seemed to be that strangers were people respondents did not know, had never met, never seen and knew absolutely nothing about. What was not explained, and is worth further investigation is how someone becomes an online friend; how do children and young people decide who is and is not an online friend, especially when distinguishing between friends they have never met before? These findings could go some way toward explaining or supporting the findings of researchers such as Davidson and Gottschalk (2011) that interacting with strangers was perceived as normal, acceptable behaviour rather than risk-taking behaviour. It may be that this is an accurate perception or it may be that 'strangers' is an inadequate concept when discussing online behaviour and that it is much more complex than originally thought, as highlighted by the distinctions made by the children and young people involved in the present study.

The distinctions made by respondents in relation to strangers appeared to be in line with the findings of May-Chahal *et al.* (2012). Whilst their research was more experimental in nature the results were very similar. Respondents from the present study tended to implement everyday methods they would use in the outside environment when distinguishing between online and offline strangers, which would suggest they use the same methods when communicating online with strangers. Rather than working with the normative expectations or wider beliefs about their peers, which May-Chahal *et al.* discuss, the respondents in this study seemed to try and fit their understanding of strangers on the internet within their normative expectations and wider beliefs about strangers in general (the outside world ‘stranger danger’ they were aware of).

The second distinction was more specific and discussed strangers only and made no reference to ‘friends they have never met before’. As with the responses discussed in Chapter Four words such as paedophile, sex offenders and grooming regularly appeared in comments when discussing the issue of strangers. Strangers in the outside environment were believed to be physically different in that individuals could see who they were. This allowed them to gain instant access to their age, gender and physical characteristics and features (facial features, how they dress). Strangers on the internet, on the other hand, were classed as ‘*data streams*’ with ‘*digital identities*’. There was no way of knowing their age or gender and their physical characteristics and features could not be ‘seen’, therefore they could be anyone. It is this anonymity and disguised identity which makes internet grooming an easier environment for child sex abusers (Quaye, 2004; Powell, 2007). Strangers in the outside environment were said to be local by respondents, whereas strangers on the internet were global and could be from anywhere. Although this distinction would appear to contradict the previous claim that

local people were likely to be bumped into, did not pose any real risk and were therefore classed as 'friends or people you have never met before'.

Again, children and young people in this study indicated their awareness of the use of deception by dangerous adults when using the internet. Strangers on the internet were classed as different from outside strangers in that they could portray themselves as more appealing than they were in real life by lying about a range of issues such as their age, gender, interests and hobbies. These comments could be seen as describing Martellozzo's (2011) hyper-cautious groomer who will develop social network sites which have cartoon style profile pictures and child orientated details. They could be whoever they want to be or whoever they think potential child victims want them to be. There seemed to be a consensus amongst respondents that just because they met someone in a game did not mean they were the same person in real life. More concerning was the distinction by respondents that they would not speak to a stranger in the outside environment, however, despite their acknowledgment that people online can pretend to be someone else, they suggested a willingness to speak to strangers on the internet. This could work in favour of the hyper-cautious groomer as young people appeared willing to talk to a person who appeared interesting and helpful in their progression in online gaming despite being aware of the dangers.

Dangers associated with strangers on the internet were also highlighted by respondents when explaining why they were different from outside strangers. Strangers on the internet were seen as being able to get away with more as they were more difficult to trace and were not physically present, which again ties in with the findings of Quayle (2004) and Powell (2007) discussed in Chapter Two. Not showing their faces was believed to provide additional freedom to strangers on the internet which made them more dangerous as they could '*do the same bad things to other people*'. Strangers were

also able to *'give out false information so it might make it [the internet] a bit more dangerous'* as strangers knew they could get away with their behaviour more as they were less likely to be detected. There was also the acknowledgement that strangers on the internet could harm you and make you feel uncomfortable. This could be mentally through communications on the internet or through their ability to find out potential victims information and track them down. When discussing the dangers associated with strangers on the internet comments were often linked to claims that *'people are pedoes'*.

Respondents who stated there was no difference between online strangers and strangers in the real environment attributed this to deception and danger. Strangers were seen as capable of lying, hiding information and being risky and dangerous regardless of whether they are outside or on the internet.

Strangers on the internet were not seen as dangerous by all respondents however, some believed that it was strangers outside who were the most dangerous because *'in the environment your life is exposed on the internet your details are exposed'*. Outside strangers were seen as having the potential to try to physically harm or kill young people. Internet strangers were seen as trying to see young people naked but being unable to physically do anything to them, therefore, no real danger could be caused. There was a perception by respondents that strangers on the internet *'cannot reach though a computer'* to get to them and were unable to physically harm them as they were *'not face to face so no danger can be caused'*. Being verbally harmed was classed as being less dangerous than being physically harmed *'Because on the internet the worst thing they can do is make a bad comment about you but in real life they can do something worse'*. This highlights a lack of knowledge and understanding of the dangers associated with strangers on the internet. Respondents were aware that online

strangers posed a risk but they did not know ‘*why juat [just] know*’ or ‘*can`t explain*’ what these risks entailed, even though they discussed paedophiles and grooming they did not appear to see these as being the same as discussing paedophiles or groomers in the outside environment.

Feeling safe from harm

Children and young people were asked how safe from harm (risk of danger) they felt from: friends they had never met before; children and young people they did not know; and adults they did not know when using the internet. When discussing an online friend they had never met before there was a mixed response. Out of 791 responses 11% (90) respondents stated that they felt ‘very safe’, 26% (205) ‘a little safe’, 23% (180) ‘a little unsafe’ and 16 % (130) ‘very unsafe’ from harm from online friends they had never met before. The remaining respondents claimed not to know how they felt. Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to state that they felt safe ($X^2=12.510, df-4, p<.05$). In addition, older young people were significantly more likely to state that they felt safe in comparison to younger people with online friends they had never met before ($X^2=104.661, df-28, p<.01$), see table 5.2 below:

Table 5.2. Respondents’ views on how safe from harm they feel from others on the internet:

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|---|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Online friends never met before | 11.4 % (90) | 25.9% (205) | 22.8% (180) | 16.4% (130) |
| Other children and young people online | 11.6 % (91) | 17.9 % (141) | 28.0 % (220) | 18.2 % (143) |
| Online adults they do not know | 4.9 % (39) | 5.9 % (47) | 12.5 % (100) | 65.6 % (523) |

Whether or not children and young people believed they felt safe from harm from other children and young people whilst on the internet also produced varied responses. Out of a total of 787 responses 11% (91) respondents stated that they felt 'very safe', 18% (141) 'a little safe', 28% (220) 'a little unsafe' and 18% (143) 'very unsafe' from harm from other children and young people they did not know when using the internet. The remaining respondents claimed not to know how they felt. Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to state that they felt unsafe ($X^2=19.998$, $df=4$, $p<.01$). Younger respondents were significantly more likely than older young people to state that they felt unsafe from harm from other children and young people when using the internet ($X^2=85.528$, $df=28$, $p<.01$).

Young people were more likely to state that they felt unsafe rather than safe with adults they did not know when on the internet (11%, 86; 78%, 623 respectively). Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to state that they felt unsafe ($X^2=24.679$, $df=4$, $p<.01$). In addition, younger respondents were significantly more likely than older young people to state they felt unsafe with adults they did not know when using the internet ($X^2=93.509$, $df=28$, $p<.01$).

This would suggest that a change takes place as children get older which makes them feel more secure on the internet.

Reasons for talking to strangers on the internet

Children and young people were also given an open-ended question which asked why they thought children and young people were willing to talk to strangers or people they have never met face-to-face before whilst on the internet. There were a total of 587 responses which could be split into 4 main themes:

- Making friends (20%)
- They don't know any better (16%)
- Feel safe (12%)
- Dangers (10%)

The remainder of the respondents stated that they did not know why children and young people were willing to talk to strangers or people they had never met face-to-face before when using the internet. They did however attempt to provide a guess as to the reasons why; stating issues such as loneliness, the need to talk to someone, curiosity and attempting to gain popularity.

Making friends

Making friends and becoming popular or having the most contacts on social networking sites was a reason given by children and young people for their willingness to talk to strangers or people they had never met face-to-face before, reflected in comments such as:

'Because they might want new friends or competitions to see who has the most friends.'

'So they could get to know someone and become friends with them.'

'they want to be popular so they can say they have more friends than anyone else'

'Because they might not have as much friends as their friends and are feeling left out so is trying to make new friends.'

'because everyone likes to talk to and meet new people'

'because maybe they dont have many friends so maybe they want to make new friends'

Having someone new to talk to rather than the same friends all the time was also a reason given by some respondents:

'because they are looking for a friend to talk to besides their friends at home'

'They need new friends as sometimes their old ones can get a bit tedious'

'Because they want to make 'new' friends but they dont understand what could happen.'

They don't know any better

Several of the respondents highlighted children and young people's naivety and put the reason for speaking to strangers or people they had never met face-to-face before as being due to them being young and not knowing any better:

'Because there young and they dont really know what there doing'

'Because they don't know the dangers'

'because they dont know any better'

'cause they are young and they dont know anything?'

'because sometimes they dont know what they are doing'

'i think they do it because they have no sense and they dont understand the dangers.'

In addition to their naivety, their lack of knowledge was also highlighted. For example:

'because they don't know about internet safety'

'because they have a very thin understanding of the internet and the people who use it.'

'They don't know anything about internet safety yet, so they won't know what they're doing.'

'because they are young and if a stranger adds them on the internet or starts talking to them they will just answer back because they won't know what to do'

This was further explained by some respondents who stated that it was a lack of awareness that was the reason why children and young people did not know any better and would talk to strangers on the internet and that they would become more aware of the dangers as they grow older:

'Because there isn't enough awareness about it and children think its fine and thats what they need to be told thats its not safe.'

'because they dont know the dangers yet but as they grow they will understand more'

Feelsafe

Finally, respondents stated a false sense of security as a reason for children and young people talking to strangers or people they have never met face-to-face before on the internet:

'Because they think that it is safe.'

'because they think nothing will happen and it will be safe'

'Because they think that getting to know them online is safe enough and you get to know them well enough.'

'They think they can trust them'

'Children and young people are willing to talk to strangers online because the stranger might make them feel safe.'

Tied in with feeling safe on the internet was the respondent's indication that the internet was a separate entity which was detached from the real environment and, therefore, could not impact a person physically:

'Because they can't physicaly touch you, so as long as you keep personal information to yourself you are safe.'

'because you may never meet them'

'Because there would not be any physical contact. They couldnt physically hurt you.'

'because they may feel that not being face to face right in front of them that nothing can happen'

'because you can't see them and you might not think they know where you stay and your mum and dad will be at home where you are on the internet'

'They think because they are not actually with them, they can't be dangerous- when really it could almost be worse talking to someone over the internet.'

The device used to communicate online is seen as a barrier which provides a false sense of security which makes children and young people feel safe:

'They are just talking to a screen, they dont realise they are talking to a real stranger.'

'They feel safer behind a screen.'

'Because it is most likely over text, And they feel safe'

'They feel it's ok because there only talking screan to screan'

Dangers

Being unaware of the potential dangers faced by talking to strangers or people you have never met face-to-face before was another theme raised by children and young people:

'because they might never see eachother ageain or know were they stay , but acualy some strangers can get your name and adress and phone number very easy WITHOUT asking you at all'

'To make new friends when they do not relise that they could hurt them or find out any personal information about them.'

'Some abused or neglected children can have anything nice said to them to make them want to meet this "nice" stranger.'

Respondents also indicated their understanding of the manipulation used by people on the internet who may 'trick' children and young people into thinking they were someone or somewhere they were not. For example:

'because they dont know the dangers nd get tricked into thinking he/she is nice'

'They tell them they live beside them or got to the same school, or are the same age, and they believe it, and think they know tthem, when it's a lie.'

'because they think they live miles away when they could stay in the same street as them'

In addition to being unaware of the dangers or being manipulated, bribery, false promises or a false sense of security were also highlighted as potential dangers associated with talking to strangers whilst online:

'because a stranger might offer them something they really want and they'll go along with it'

'They can appear comforting which will make children feel more comfortable with them'

'i think they are maybe asking for help but they shouldn't they should ask for help from friends they know or family.'

'they think its safer when its really not, anyone could get a hold of your personal details and information, and find out where you live, whats your phone number or email adress'

As with some of the responses discussed in Chapter Four, respondents were keen to identify why other children and young people spoke to strangers on the internet (mainly younger children) but did not include themselves in their response. The main response

was that children and young people did not know any better as they were young and unaware of the danger they could be putting themselves in. Being unaware of the dangers was associated with children having little or no knowledge and understanding of internet safety, suggesting that this information was currently being provided too late and needed to be implemented in the education of younger children. In addition, lack of awareness was given as an alternative reason for children and young people talking to strangers on the internet, stating that there was not enough awareness and that as children grew older they would gain a better understanding of the dangers associated with the internet. This would suggest that it is not just internet safety teaching which needs to be targeted at younger children but awareness-raising also needs to be targeted for the younger age groups. These comments coincide with Livingstone *et al.*'s (2011) findings and recommendations that awareness-raising should be targeted to specific groups as concerns faced by teenagers were different from the concerns faced by younger children which were different again from those classed as 'vulnerable' groups.

Lack of awareness seemed to be a concern for the respondents of the present study as they not only provided this as a reason why some children and young people talk to strangers, but were able to articulate the risks involved. Examples included their naivety leading them to make friends with someone who wishes to hurt them or the strangers being able to trace and locate them without the child or young person realising this. This supports Calder's (2004) suggestion that a child's own naivety and trusting nature, along with curiosity could enhance the risk faced by children and young people. Whilst this naivety and trusting nature may be relatively normal behaviour in a face-to-face environment where it could be classed as part of 'growing up', Calder points out that this is not the case in the online environment where it could rapidly be turned into a dangerous or uncomfortable situation. It may go some way toward explaining how

some sex abusers can be so successful at the friendship and relationship forming stages of the cybergrooming cycle discussed in Chapter Two. However, the young people involved in the present study were very clear in describing the dangers of the internet which would suggest they were not as naïve as Calder suggests. This concept of naivety also does not sit with the previous discussion of young people as having agency and being fully capable of participating in society and research.

One concern that was expressed, which may warrant further investigation, was that some abused or neglected children may use the internet to speak to strangers because these strangers could have nice things to say to them; which may lead to them into arranging to meet with the stranger. This would suggest that these children are potentially at greater risk than other children of being groomed on the internet. This would support Wells and Mitchell's (2008) findings that youths who have experienced physical or sexual abuse or experienced high family conflict were more likely to talk to people they had never met before online than online friends. This highlights the awareness of children and young people that some groups may be more vulnerable than others and who these groups are likely to be and why.

Deception involved in using the internet

The potential deception involved in using the internet was highlighted by some respondents. They believed that children and young people may be '*tricked*' into thinking the person they were talking to was someone or somewhere else as they can '*often befriend them by masquerading as someone else*'. According to respondents, some children who were unaware of the dangers of the internet, may be manipulated into thinking the stranger they were talking to is not really a 'stranger' but someone who attended the same school as them, lived near them, was same age as them or,

alternatively, the stranger may claim they live miles away but were in fact in the same street as the young person they are communicating with. This last point again contradicts the claims made earlier by respondents that people who live in the same area as the young person were not viewed as 'strangers' but 'people they had never met before' and posed no real risk. This manipulation can be taken further. According to the respondents '*a stranger might offer them something they really want and they'll go along with it*' giving a false sense of security and trust. This could, according to respondents, lead to some children inadvertently giving out personal information to strangers. These comments tie in with the reasons as to why children and young people needed to be kept safe on the internet discussed in Chapter Four.

It is this use of deception which internet sex abusers rely on the most in the online environment. Researchers such as Calder (2004) and O'Connell (2004), have highlighted that child sex offenders will gradually introduce children to abuse networks by way of gifts and through building up trust. These two methods have been identified by respondents in the present study as reasons why children and young people will talk to strangers on the internet. Internet child sex abusers will spend a substantial amount of time communicating with potential child victims, getting to know them and building their trust (O'Connell, 2004, Gillespie, 2008). If the promise of gifts or a false sense of security and trust is believed to be a reason why children and young people talk to strangers, then they are very quickly going to find themselves in an uncomfortable position without realising what has happened. A child sex abuser could, for example, rapidly move a potential child victim through the exclusivity stage and be ready to move into the sexual stage of the cybergrooming cycle without the child being aware of what was taking place. It is therefore necessary to develop internet safety advice which can be tailored to all age groups and which provides them with the knowledge and

understanding to communicate safely and effectively when on the internet, especially if, as May-Chahal *et al.* found, they are using the everyday methods they would use in the outside environment to navigate the online environment. It also highlights the importance of developing legislation which is specific to grooming rather than to the act of child sexual abuse itself, which is now being implemented in Scotland (See Chapter Two).

The promise of gifts or a false sense of security could also be tied to the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding proposed by Vygotsky (1978) and Wood *et al.* (1976). Using deception to give a false identity and ‘friendlier’ image could be used to gain a child or young person’s interest in continuing the communications, therefore ‘encouraging their interest in the task’ which could then be ‘simplified’ whenever necessary. The use of gifts and false sense of security and trust could then be used to both ‘keep the child in pursuit of a task’ and ‘mark the critical features of the task’. Internet child sex abusers would therefore be working within the child’s zone of proximal development but letting the potential child victim believe that they are still in control.

Making new friends

Another reason why children and young people may be willing to talk to strangers on the internet is to make new friends. Popularity and the competitive nature of social networking sites may make some children and young people more likely to add strangers to their accounts ‘*Because they might want new friends or competitions to see who has the most friends*’. They may also do so because they are looking to meet someone new as they have grown tired of their outside friends or ‘*because they are looking for a friend to talk to besides their friends at home*’. Alternatively, children and

young people who *'are unconfident, don't have as much friends, feel lonely, feel like it's a good way to meet friends'* may be more willing to communicate with strangers on the internet. This is seen as an innocent act carried out in order to find someone to talk to and communicate with without thinking about the dangers they may be putting themselves in. This would suggest that making friends when on the internet is slightly more complex than making friends in the outside environment with several reasons or motivations behind why children and young people make friends on the internet. Taken with the levels of disclosure discussed in Chapter Four these findings build on Peter *et al.*'s (2005) findings which suggest that online friendship formation was a complex process involving self-disclosure, frequency of communication and motive for social compensation.

False sense of security

The final suggestion given as to why children and young people may talk to strangers on the internet was related to a false sense of security. It was suggested by respondents that some young people may believe that it was safe to talk to strangers on the internet *'because they think the strangers cant touch you but its not a good idea'*. This was also linked to the manipulation discussed previously, in that children and young people may believe that through talking with strangers they were getting to know them and were building up a form of trust with the stranger as *'The strangers could appear to be very nice to them'* and *'they think they might no them or they will end up being friends with them'*. This allows the stranger to make a young person feel safe on the internet therefore encouraging them to continue their communications. Related to this was some respondents' belief that the internet was something which was detached from real life, therefore, anything that occurred on the internet was not really happening to them, *'They think because they are not actually with them, they can't be dangerous- when*

really it could almost be worse talking to someone over the internet'. Respondents stated that this belief also lead children and young people to believe that they would never meet with the stranger and would never physically 'see' this person, therefore, they were at no danger of being harmed. In addition, the device used to access the internet could be seen as a false barrier which protects children and young people. Respondents suggested that this could lead to some children and young people mistakenly thinking that they are only *'there only talking screen to screen'* and it is only text they are using which poses no risk to them. This again highlights their belief (and that of other children and young people) that the physical and mental harms faced on the internet were different from that faced in the outside environment, suggesting they knew that there were dangers associated with the internet but not what or how serious these dangers were.

What these findings highlight is that there is a difference between what children and young people say and what children and young people do. Respondents provided a detailed list of the dangers associated with talking to strangers on the internet and the reasons behind why some children and young people are willing to talk to strangers online. In the previous chapter findings were discussed which showed that females and older young people were more likely than males and younger children and young people to add details of strangers to their instant messaging and social networking accounts. In addition older children and young people were found to be more likely to go on to meet strangers face-to-face (with friends or family). The levels and type of disclosure discussed in Chapter Four also contradict the information discussed previously, however, not all children and young people participate in disclosing personal information. Overall, in general young people say not to meet strangers but some children actually say they will. These discrepancies would suggest that

information about the dangers associated with strangers on the internet may be getting through to some children and young people but is not reaching them all or that some are choosing to ignore the safety advice provided for them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, these findings would suggest that respondents approach the internet with some caution; however, the level of caution used is largely dependent on their age. This would support the findings from the previous chapter which found that older children are more likely to disclose personal information and Livingstone *et al.*'s (2011) findings that older children were more likely to participate in risk-taking activities. Whilst it may be seen as comforting that children and young people still state that they feel a little unsafe or very unsafe around adults they did not know, some still talk to strangers and add their details to their social networking sites. This is further complicated by those adults who use deception and portray themselves as someone else when using the internet. Added to this are the respondents' accounts of the differences between strangers and people they have never met before and online strangers and outside 'real' life strangers. All of this suggests that awareness-raising of internet stranger danger is a complex issue which needs to be developed to be age appropriate and flexible to suit the needs of all children and young people, supporting Peter *et al.*'s (2005) claim that we cannot treat all adolescents the same.

Key Findings:

- Forty-seven percent stated that there was a difference between 'strangers on the internet' and 'strangers outside in the real environment'.

- Respondents who did make a distinction between strangers in the ‘online environment’ and strangers in the ‘outside environment’ indicated four key differences:
 - Online strangers can pretend to be someone else.
 - Strangers in the ‘real’ environment can be worse than those online.
 - Online stranger can be a threat or danger as they can get away with more.
 - Being able to physically see strangers outside can reduce the danger.
- Seventy-eight percent of respondents claimed they felt unsafe rather than safe with adults they did not know when on the internet.
- Sixteen percent of respondents claimed to feel very unsafe from harm from online friends they had never met before.
- Fourteen percent of respondents claimed there was a distinction that respondents between ‘strangers’ and ‘people they have never met before’
- Reasons given for young people being willing to talk to strangers or people they have never met face-to-face before whilst on the internet were:
 - Making new friends and increasing their popularity.
 - Naivety, children are young and do not know any better,
 - Feeling safe, the internet can provide a false sense of security
 - Children are unaware of the potential dangers associated with the internet.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

This chapter will present and discuss respondents' opinions of issues relating to education and whether they believe that their school is doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet or if they feel more needs to be done. Suggestions put forward by respondents on how to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet will also be presented and discussed. Tables presenting the detailed percentages of findings can be found in Appendix D.

Who knows more about internet safety

When asked who they believed to know more about being safe on the internet some respondents cited parents and carers (38% of 817) as knowing the most. This was followed by parents, carers, teachers and respondents all knowing the same (25% of 817), teachers knowing the most (23% of 817) and respondents knowing the most (14% of 817). Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to state that they knew the most about internet safety ($X^2=12.004$, $df=3$, $p<.05$). Younger respondents were significantly more likely to state that parents and carers knew more about internet safety whilst older respondents were significantly more likely to state that either everyone knew the same amount or they knew more about internet safety ($X^2=103.246$, $df=21$, $p<.05$), see table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1. Respondents' views about who they believe to know more about being safe on the internet:

| | YOU | PARENTS/CARER | TEACHERS | ALL KNOW THE SAME |
|---------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Male | 17.9% | 36.3% | 23.5% | 22.3% |
| Female | 10.1% | 39.0% | 23.0% | 27.9% |
| P6 | 4.5% | 48.9% | 30.7% | 15.9% |
| P7 | 5.0% | 40.8% | 29.2% | 25.0% |
| S1 | 4.5% | 56.1% | 18.9% | 20.5% |
| S2 | 16.3% | 31.6% | 25.2% | 26.8% |
| S3 | 25.8% | 30.6% | 16.1% | 27.4% |
| S4 | 21.7% | 28.3% | 26.1% | 23.9% |
| S5 | 33.3% | 22.2% | 0.0% | 44.4% |
| S6 | 42.1% | 10.5% | 15.8% | 31.6% |

Whilst the majority of respondents' reported that they felt schools were doing enough to teach children and young people about safety on the internet this was not reflected in their opinions of who they believed knew more about internet safety. Similar results were found by Livingstone *et al.* (2011), who found that while levels of teacher mediation were high they could be improved.

These results could be explained by Davidson and Gottschalk's (2011) suggestion that adults did not know enough about children and young people's online behaviour and norms at present. As a result, effective and meaningful educational programmes which make children and young people aware of the risks and dangers they face cannot be created. The change in levels of disclosure and risks taken by children as they grow older, as highlighted in the present study, also suggests that looking at children and young people as a whole is ineffective and that a detailed understanding of the

behaviour and norms of each age group is required. Achieving this will allow for evidence based education and preventative programs to be developed which can evolve as new technology evolves, as suggested by Wolak, Finkelhor and Mitchell (2010).

Internet safety education in schools

Seventy eight percent of respondents (634/814) believed that schools were doing enough to teach children and young people about safety on the internet with no significant difference of opinion between male and female respondents. The older the young person, the more likely they were to report that that schools are *not* doing enough to teach children and young people about safety on the internet, with younger ones significantly more likely to believe this to be the case ($X^2 = 62.556, df=7, p<.05$).

The responses to the open-ended part of the question (367 responses) about whether or not schools were doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet fell into five broad themes:

- Internet safety teaching suggestions (26%)
- Schools are doing enough (13%)
- Schools need to teach internet safety more often (6%)
- Highlighting the negative consequences of using the internet (6%)
- Inviting external visitors to discuss internet safety (2%)

In addition to this 186 respondents stated 'no' or 'don't know' in their open-ended response suggesting they were unable to provide any suggestions to this question or they felt that schools were doing enough; interpreting this data proved difficult. The remaining respondents did not complete this question which again was difficult to

interpret but could suggest that they believed the schools were already doing enough and did not need to implement any new internet safety teaching methods or materials.

Internet safety teaching suggestions

Young people provided some suggestions on how they believed the subject should be presented to them within the school. One suggestion which was frequently referred to was that education needed to be targeted not only at older children but at younger children as well:

'for younger children in ICT give them a lecture class once every day a week'

'I think schools should do more to teach young people the safety's of the internet. As younger children are using the internet more these days and may not know the dangers and how to stay safe'

'i think that the schools should be leaning them at a lower age'

The main suggestion or request that was made by respondents was that it was not enough to target older children; internet safety education needed to be targeted at younger children. Similar results were found by Webster *et al.* (2012) who found that their respondents were also clear in stating that education programmes needed to target younger children. Respondents in this recent study claimed that the internet was increasingly being accessed by younger children and it was therefore important that they were made aware of the dangers of the internet at a younger age. Some suggested that this be taught as often as once a week to ensure that the message gets through. This coincides with the concerns raised by respondents as reported in Chapters Four and Five about the naivety and lack of awareness younger children have about the potential

dangers associated with internet use. These findings also support Green *et al.*'s (2011) findings that younger children lack key safety awareness skills in relation to the internet.

A second frequent suggestion was to explain internet safety and the associated danger in more detail with regards to how to be safe:

'They dont have talks with pupils telling them about what things there are to help you they only tell you to be safe (they dont tell you how)'

'give young people reasons or show them straightforwardly what would happen if they maybe didnt listen'

'instead of just blocking/banning sites letting the pupils know why how the websites are unsafe or inappropriate'

Additionally, there were some children and young people who believed that the current teaching was of no benefit to children, had no educational aspects to it and was too negative:

'We learn for ourselves. We get told not to something silly and then see what will happen if we did - We know better'

'tell them if thay have facebook/ twitter/ bebo ect. dont say they shouldnt have it, teach them how to be safe when useing it'

'they make the interet look like a bad place to go on to but they dot really explain the good parts of the internet'

Scott (2011) carried out a consultation exercise which found that providing children and young people with knowledge and understanding of safe and unsafe behaviours on the internet was not enough as external factors and influences were present which would

have an impact on their behaviour and actions. This is supported by the respondents in the present study who believed that they were not given enough information. Current internet safety lessons and measures in school involve blocking or banning certain websites and informing students that, for their own safety, they need to be safe when using the internet. Whilst this may be good practice it was perceived not to be enough: children and young people apparently need more detailed explanations as to why these measures have been put in place. According to respondents, they did not get the dangers of the internet explained to them. They were given talks which informed them that they had to be safe and that there were certain websites banned from their school (in the interest of their safety) but teachers were not explaining why they had to be safe and why these specific websites were banned. Respondents would like teachers to explain to them why certain websites were banned (what risks were posed by these sites) and rather than just being told to be safe they would like teachers to explain how to be safe by explaining the dangers more and how to avoid them. This could be achieved by showing or explaining what tools and measures were currently available to help them be safe when using the internet.

Lessons that teach children not to do something, like accessing inappropriate websites, or not to have something, like Facebook or Twitter, without explaining why were likely to lead children and young people to try it out to see what was dangerous about these sites. What the respondents would like to see were lessons being developed which teach them how to be safe when using social networking sites or Twitter accounts and explain why certain sites were safe or unsafe. They may then take this knowledge and utilise it when accessing the internet at home. This approach may help prevent children and young people from becoming curious and may reduce the number of potential risks or dangers they put themselves in when using the internet. If children and young people

are leaving school lessons curious as to why they are not allowed to behave in a certain way or go on certain sites they may be vulnerable to being targeted by potential child sex offenders who use a child's natural curiosity and naivety to lure potential victims (Calder, 2004): in particular, Martellozzo's (2011) hyper-confident groomer who creates social networking profiles aimed at making a potential child victim curious pose a high risk.

Some young people provided more detailed and practical suggestions for approaches to teaching internet safety in schools. Some examples include:

'They could set up a test and if the child does not pass the test they re-take it again after they took it first and if they get in they have to obey the rules and have access to the internet'

'make up a school only social network site and let new children make more friends but teachers should check daily and if they misbehave they will suffer the consequences from their guidance'

'have a "chillout" period at lunch or in tutorial, let them go on facebook, youtube etc.. , and aswell as them being on the internet also teach them about safety:)'

'show them some games and what to do if your under a bad situation'

'They should have a class on how to use the internet and how to be safe on it'

'making up fake problems and getting us to solve them.'

Incorporating the above suggestions in education could allow pupils to be rewarded by allowing the pupil access to the internet during breaks or lunch where they may safely access social networking sites or YouTube; sites that they would not normally be given access to during school hours and on school premises. A school only social network site could allow children and young people to make more friends whilst being monitored by their teachers. It could also be a method used for teaching internet safety, such as privacy settings and report buttons, to children and young people which they could then apply to situations outside of the school settings. Should inappropriate behaviour take place, then pupils could be banned from accessing the site for a set period (which would depend on the severity of their behaviour); this could also teach them that there are consequences associated with inappropriate behaviour on the internet. Another suggestion made by respondents was to demonstrate how to be safe when using the internet. This could be achieved through developing games or scenarios (which contained mock situations or problems) which the children had to work through individually or in groups with their teacher, solving the issues that arise. This would give them practical experience which they could integrate into their learning.

These suggestions could support the use of zone of proximal development and scaffolding as a useful concept to consider when planning internet safety lessons. Developing methods to teach children and young people, and rewarding them when they achieve a task and working with them when they encounter difficulties in solving problems would allow them to develop an understanding of internet safety appropriate to their cognitive abilities and would allow them to develop and advance their online safety skills at a pace and level that suits them. This supports Berson's (2003) who argued that young people need to become proficient at utilising internet devices and develop their awareness of the risks involved.

Suggestions were also made for more teaching to be given on topics such as *'giving out personal information'*, *'playing games online'*, *'safety buttons on networking sites'*, *'anti-virus'* and *'bullying online'*. In addition to this it was also requested that schools provide *'More suveys to know what children think about they saftey of computing'*. Respondents stated that children and young people need to be provided with reasons or demonstrations which highlight what will happen if they did not listen and were not safe when using the internet. In addition, they would like to be taught about safety buttons and privacy settings, (see Chapter Seven) as well as information on issues such as online gaming, anti-viruses and cyberbullying. These suggestions go some way towards explaining the observation in Chapter Four that children and young people were aware that there were dangers associated with the internet but not what these dangers actually were. Some respondents also requested that lessons include safety advice on giving out personal information. This lack of safety advice may help explain why some children and young people were more likely than others to disclose personal information. Similar results were found by The UK Safer Internet Centre 2013 whose responses from young people suggested that, whilst internet safety may be being taught, the content of the lessons were not covering the topics they would like to learn about.

Schools are doing enough

Even those respondents who thought schools had done enough had different views about the quality of schools' teaching – some felt it was good, others had become rather frustrated and bored with the messages. Several young people were happy with the education provided by their school with comments such as:

'very good and caring when it comes to the internet and your safety'

'my school and other schools in the area get enough teaching and learning and information on the internet and being safe on it'

'i think what is being taught in schools is good and helps a lot'.

Those who were happy with their school stated that their school was good, caring and very helpful and provided teaching, learning and information which related the internet and how to be safe when online. They claimed that their school was adequate at teaching children and young people about being safe on the internet and that teaching of this topic took place regularly. This supports the UK Safer Internet Centres (2013) findings that eighty per cent of children and young people in their research claimed to have been taught about internet safety at some point over the last year (2012-2013). Respondents in this recent study were also keen to point out, however, that whilst the school may be doing a good job of teaching children and young people, it may not be enough. This was, according to respondents, through no fault of the school. According to respondents, some children were given lessons on internet safety but they did not listen to the advice and information that was being made available to them, suggesting that schools on their own were not enough for teaching internet safety and that education needs to continue outside of the school environment or be taught in schools in a different way:

'I think they're teaching children and young people enough about being safe on the internet, people just don't listen to them'

'children don't listen to it'.

Alternatively, it may not be a case of children not listening but more a case of children becoming frustrated with their lessons on internet safety. Some respondents stated that

they believed their school was spending far too much time teaching children and young people about safety on the internet. This resulted in lessons becoming boring with pupils no longer being prepared to listen to what was being taught, not because they had chosen to ignore the safety lessons but because they had lost interest in them:

'i think the teachers are spending too long teaching that stuff about safety - it can be very very very very boring'

'i know enough about the dangers and don't want to hear anymore of it !!!'.

This is a concern raised by Burn and Whillet (2004) who feared that internet safety lessons risked becoming prohibitive and humourless which would lead children and young people to seek entertainment and excitement elsewhere in the online environment, such as instant messaging and online gaming. Respondents of the present study did, however, acknowledge that internet safety lessons were there for their benefit and were necessary but claimed they were tired of hearing the same thing all the time. Lessons on internet safety could be more interesting if teachers pitched the information within the young people's zone of proximal development (see Chapter Two). Rather than being taught the same thing all of the time, they would find that the lessons changed and adapted as they grew older.

There was also an acknowledgement that whilst the teaching may be boring or there may be too much of it, it is a subject which needs to be discussed with young people for their own benefit: *'nope i get fed up hearing about it but it is for your own good :L'*.

The issue of responsibility, which seems to be a recurring theme, came up again when talking about schools with some respondents claiming that internet safety did not need

to be taught in schools. They believed that they already knew enough about being safe when using the internet and that everyone should know what is and is not safe when online, evident in comments such as:

'i know enough to be safe on the internet its in my own hands from now'

'We all pretty much know how to be safe on the internet. Just don't search inappropriate things'

'everybody should know what is safe and what isn't'.

These respondents took a common sense approach to internet safety believing that it was a case of not searching inappropriate *'things'*, almost using instinct to know what was and was not appropriate.

Finally, some respondents took it further, believing that by teaching internet safety in schools teachers were overstepping their boundaries and attempting to *'tell'* children and young people what sites they could or could not go on or how they should behave when using the internet, which was seen as the role of parents rather than teachers, claiming:

'they are doing to much because they are trying to tell people that chatrooms are not safe but its there parents decion'

Schools need to teach internet safety more often

As indicated, not all respondents believed that schools were doing enough or that it was not the role of schools to teach internet safety to children and young people. Some felt that there needed to be more internet safety teaching within schools:

'they cover it all but dont do alot of it'

'do more about it in classes'

'talk more about it have a couple of lessons'

'go over most of the things because i am not very great at internet safety'

'do a talk maybe 1st a month'

This was not to say that they felt they were not getting taught about internet safety, but that they were not getting taught frequently enough. Respondents would like to see schools do more of what they were already doing, for example, going back over their safety advice and making this a regular occurrence such as once a month:

'the general safety stuff and the philosophy of keeping to yourself by default are effective enough. I suppose simply more of the same'

'i think the should bring it up more than they do because we learnt about it in social education class but maybe in I.T they could talk about it to!'

Schools were covering internet safety but it would appear to be a short lesson, with a large amount of information, which children and young people struggled to remember, they therefore required a refresher lesson at a later date. This is contradictory to those who felt they had been taught the same thing too many times and were bored and no longer listen to the safety lessons. The solution may be to provide varied lessons which will prevent boredom whilst reminding children and young people about the safety issues related to internet use, as suggested by Burn and Whillet (2004).

Finally, some children and young people believed that there needed to be more awareness-raising by schools in relation to internet safety, as can be seen in the following comments:

'talk more about it and raise more awareness'

'Yes teach first years the dangers of the internet. As i am in 4th year and this is the first time we have been made aware of internet dangers'

The message coming across from respondents seems to be that the internet safety lessons that were currently being taught in their school were inconsistent. In line with the finding from the UK Safer Internet Centre (2013) that online safety teaching appears to be lacking with lower primary and upper secondary age groups, there did not seem to be any consensus between schools in Scotland as to how and when internet safety teaching should take place. Some respondents believed that too much was taught while some believed that not enough was taught and others believe it is not taught soon enough. There were children and young people involved in this study who were in 4th year (15 years) who claimed that this was the first time they had been made aware of internet dangers. What was unclear about these comments was whether they meant that 4th year was the first time they were taught about internet safety in school or it was participating in this study that they were first made to consider the potential dangers associated with the internet.

The general safety advice and the idea of keeping yourself private, when using the internet, was believed by respondents in the present study to be effective but not promoted enough. More of the same was required with additional information when needed. Providing lessons during appropriate classes or lessons was also believed to

help make the messages stronger. Children and young people in secondary schools, for example, stated that they received their internet safety lessons during social education classes and believed these lessons may be more effective and listened to more if they were taught during Information Communication Technology (ICT) classes instead. Again, this is in line with the UK Safer Internet Centre (2013) who suggested that educational staff needed to be provided with up-to-date knowledge and equipment so that they may ensure that effective lessons can take place.

Highlighting the negative consequences of using the internet

One issue that was raised several times by respondents and was linked with making use of external visitors was the suggestion that the negative consequences of dangerous behaviour on the internet should be made more explicit to children and young people. This could be achieved through ‘*videos*’, ‘*true stories*’, ‘*demonstrations*’, and ‘*guest speakers*’ (who have experienced first-hand the dangers of the internet). Young people believed that it was important that the dangers of the internet be explained or shown to them more fully:

‘tell the people the consequences about the internet and safety’

‘teach how dangerous it can be and the consequences’

‘show them more videos that can get it in their head that there are always someone out there that knows who you are’

‘They should tell them more about people's personal experiences as they provide the strongest message’

‘Actually showing- from the websites’.

Young people suggested that it was important to highlight the dangers of giving out personal information and the consequences of doing so when online. They also stated that children should be told more about paedophiles and how dangerous people can be, suggesting adults should *'Tell them more about pedofiles in the world that could potentially harm them'*. There were also those who believed that we should *'Teach them the truth, and stop exaggurating about it'*

There were, however, young people who went even further with their suggestions believing that:

'They aren't scaring them enough, they should be telling them all the dangers, not just saying "dont talk to strangers"'

'really shock the children with stories of the sort of things that can happen to people on the internet'

The importance of this issue was further highlighted through the following comment:

'remind people of interent saftey and explain real life scenarios to help lead children in the right path whilst using the internet as my friend wasnt taught internet safety and ended up meeting up with some man and he is now in prison and shell neer be the same'

Children and young people were very keen to highlight that internet safety:

'should be a big subject in school and have more posters and stuff advertised so we know exactly what to do when something happens'.

Using videos, true stories, demonstrations or guest speakers to explain the dangers of the internet was believed to be a requirement of internet safety teaching by some

respondents. Showing children and young people the consequences of dangerous behaviour and the personal experiences of others who have been in dangerous situations is believed to be the best way to get the message through to pupils. This would provide a clear message about the dangers associated with giving out personal information when using the internet or visiting inappropriate sites. In addition to this, respondents would like schools to inform children and young people about paedophiles and explain how dangerous some people can be. Respondents were clear, however, that they would like to be told the truth about paedophiles and dangerous adults and not an exaggerated version. These comments would support the findings of Burn and Willet (2004) who claimed that current understandings of paedophilia were based on ‘folkloric’ understandings that were disproportionate to the actual threat posed. This leads adults to place skewed warnings of danger when discussing the dangers associated with the internet which, in turn, produces excessive anxiety in children and young people.

Inviting external visitors to discuss internet safety

External visitors were another possibility for internet safety teaching and awareness-raising suggested by children and young people. The suggestions here ranged from experts to young people, with the belief being that these people would make the topic more interesting and memorable. Talks and presentations provided through school assemblies or specialised teaching were believed to be a method of ensuring that the message got across to children and young people:

‘Get someone in to teach children in schools about the dangers of the internet, so that they all know, and there wont be any excuses’

Experts were believed to be an effective way of informing children and young people about the dangers of the internet:

'more talks from experts'

'getting someone thats good with internet to give the class a talk about safety'

Additional suggestions for external visitors were of a more serious nature and related to being more open and honest about the dangers experienced by some children and young people using the internet:

'have more visitors telling the pupils about being safe whilst on the internet and tell them storys about the lives of some children who were not safe when on the internet it may make them listen more'

'get people into the school that some thing has happed to them thats happend on the internet to show what its like and what you can do if it happends!!!!!!!!!!!!!!'

This could be experts in the field of internet, online gaming, protection and security or young people who may be able to relate with the children and make the topic more interesting and memorable. Such experts could get the message across more effectively as the children and young people know that these people knew what they were talking about and could teach them all about the dangers associated with the internet. Respondents stated that they would listen and pay attention more to experts which would result in all children and young people knowing about being safe on the internet and would therefore have no excuses for taking risks when online. Some respondents believed that external visitors could provide a more effective discussion on internet safety in comparison with what they received from their teachers. They believed external visitors could inform children and young people of stories about the lives and

experiences of children who have not been safe whilst on the internet. Alternatively, inviting young people that have experienced something negative whilst on the internet could also be beneficial. They could explain to children and young people their own negative experience by explaining what happened, what it was like, and how they felt which could be used to inform children and young people how they could avoid potential dangers on the internet.

Bringing in young people to talk with pupils about their experiences and the dangers of the internet may help schools develop a community of learners as proposed by Brown (1997). Allowing peers to learn from each other, with the teacher playing the role of expert guide who only facilitates the process, allows pupils and teachers to work together on a shared activity thereby enhancing the learning process. This can allow children and young people to feel more empowered and better prepared to deal with the dangers associated with internet use. This, in turn, may make children and young people less likely to turn to the stranger on the internet for expert advice and help, therefore preventing child sex abusers from using the scaffolding process to their own advantage.

Conclusion

In conclusion, rather than just telling children and young people not to talk to strangers, some respondents would like schools to use some form of scare tactic or shock tactic which put things into perspective for them. Whilst they were aware that the dangers associated with the internet did not happen to everyone and did not occur regularly, they were aware that potential risk associated with dangerous adults (such as grooming and meeting dangerous adults face-to-face) was a serious and very real issue that needed more attention drawn to it. These findings suggest that the respondents in this

study would like education relating to internet safety to continue in schools but that it needs to become more detailed, focused and age-appropriate. They were keen to provide solutions and suggestions as to how this could be achieved indicating that they had put some thought into this issue. There was an overall awareness that current education on internet safety was effective to an extent, however, the increase in mobile devices and move to more private access discussed in Chapter Four would suggest that lessons need updating on a regular basis in order to keep up with advancements in technology and continuous changes in the behaviour and attitudes of children and young people when on the internet.

Key Findings:

- Thirty-seven percent of respondents cited parents and carers as knowing the most about being safe on the internet.
- Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported that they felt schools were doing enough to teach children and young people about safety on the internet.
- The older the young person, the more likely they were to report that that schools are *not* doing enough to teach children and young people about safety on the internet.
- The main suggestion or request that was made by respondents was that it was not enough to target older children; internet safety education needed to be targeted at younger children as well.
- A second frequent suggestion by respondents was for internet safety lessons to clearly explain internet safety measures and describe the associated dangers with the internet in more detail.

- Some respondents stated they believed that they already knew enough about being safe when using the internet and that everyone should know what is and is not safe when online.
- A minority of respondents stated that by teaching internet safety in schools teachers were overstepping their boundaries as this was seen as the role of parents rather than teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The final theme to emerge from the analysis was children, young people and the Scottish Government. This chapter will discuss respondents' opinions about issues relating to the safety measures currently in place on the internet and whether or not they believed the government was doing enough to listen to children and young people's views about how they would like to be protected from dangerous adults when on the internet. Suggestions put forward by children and young people about what the government could do so that children and young people could be listened to more and about ways that the government could protect children and young people from dangerous adults on the internet will also be discussed. Tables presenting the detailed percentages of findings can be found in Appendix E.

Is the Scottish Government doing enough to listen to the views of children and young people in relation to internet safety?

Table 7.1. Respondents' views about whether the Government was doing enough to listen to children and young people's opinions on about protection from dangerous adults when using the internet:

| | YES | NO | DON'T KNOW |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Male | 22.5% | 23.8% | 53.6% |
| Female | 16.3% | 26.9% | 56.8% |
| P6 | 29.2% | 20.2% | 50.6% |
| P7 | 11.8% | 27.7% | 60.5% |
| S1 | 31.0% | 17.1% | 51.9% |
| S2 | 18.6% | 26.7% | 54.7% |
| S3 | 16.7% | 26.7% | 56.7% |
| S4 | 8.7% | 37.0% | 54.3% |
| S5 | 2.9% | 40.0% | 57.1% |
| S6 | 10.5% | 10.5% | 78.9% |

As can be seen from table 7.1 above only 19 % of 810 (156/810) respondents believed that the Scottish Government was doing enough to listen to children and young people's opinions on being protected from dangerous adults when using the internet; 25% (206/810) of respondents did not believe this was the case and 55% (448/810) of respondents stated they did not know if the government was doing enough to listen. There was no significant difference of opinion between male and female respondents ($X^2=5.236$, $df=2$, $p>.05$). Whilst more than half of respondents claimed not to know if the government was doing enough to listen to the opinions of children and young people younger respondents were more likely to state they believed the government was doing enough than older young people. There was no significant difference however between the age group of respondents and their perceptions of whether or not the government was doing enough to listen to them ($X^2=41.156$, $df=14$, $p<.01$). This suggests that for those who believe that it is the government's role to protect young people there is not a strong enough government presence when it comes to children and

young people's safety when using the internet, either through the education system or on the internet itself.

Respondents were provided the opportunity to elaborate on their response to whether or not they felt the government was doing enough listen to children and young people's opinions on being protected from dangerous adults when using the internet. Eighteen percent of respondents who claimed they believed that the government was doing enough provided responses such as:

'our goverment is good so i am sure they know what they are doing i support them'

'theres nothing more i think they really can do'

'Children know that they need to be careful'

'there is quite a lot getting done but there is also a lot of unsafe adults about too'

In contrast to this some young people commented that the government was doing too much. This view was expressed in a number of ways:

'stop ramming down our throats'

'doing too much because there are websites that are okay and they still don't let us on'

'coz like dat cood stop me having fb so..'

Sixty of the respondents who claimed not to know if the government was doing enough to listen to the opinions of children and young people provided responses to the open-

ended question. Many claimed that they were unaware of what the government currently does or is doing in this regard:

'I don't know what they're doing so I don't know how they could change it to make it better'

'I couldn't say as I do not know enough to comment about what the Government are doing'

The majority of young people, however, simply stated that they *'don't know'* without adding an explanation. There were also those who felt something needed to be done but could not say what that was. Alternatively, there were those who believed the government was doing something, they just did not know what that was, evident in the following comment:

'i dont realy know but i think they are doing something about it !'

This is an area which requires further investigation to gain a more in-depth understanding of children and young people's views of the government in relation to internet safety and dangerous adults. One solution which could help change the opinions of those who felt that the government need to do more is to encourage active participation by children and young people. According to UNICEF (2011), allowing children and young people to actively participate in the development and implementation of protection and security measures would lead to tools and measures being developed which would be more effective as they would make sense to the young people using them. This would empower them with the necessary information required to take preventative measures when using the internet. In addition, actively involving

children and young people in initiatives would provide them with a source of experience and expertise which they can apply to any situation relating to the internet.

What the Government can do to listen to children and young people

The 276 responses to the question about whether there was anything they would like the Government to do so that children and young people can be listened to more about how they would like to be protected from dangerous adults when using the internet fell into three themes:

- Imposing restrictions, raising awareness and harsher punishments (33%)
- Ease of reporting incidents and a more pronounced Government presence (14%)
- Listening to children's opinions (14%)

Whilst these can be looked at individually, it must be noted that there is some element of overlap between some of the categories which will be highlighted below. The remaining children and young people (39%) responded either 'yes' or 'no' and did not provide any further explanation regarding their response.

Imposing restrictions, raising awareness and harsher punishments

Children and young people provided suggestions on how the government could help protect them from dangerous adults when online. Some of these issues have been discussed in the chapter on education and in the sections above, such as, teaching children at younger ages, giving talks or presentations (external speakers in schools etc.) and greater police presence in schools. Others involve a lot more work and consideration and some have serious ethical implications.

A key issue which was raised by several children and young people was for the government to impose more restrictions on what was available on the internet and have stricter rules regarding age:

'more and more bans like facebook for example you need to be 18, none of us are',

'block things that they do not think is suitable and like chatting because they could pretend its there freind and its someone much older and do not know'

'put stricter rules in place to prevent dangerous people from operating'.

Other suggestions in this area included removing the opportunity to put telephone numbers in sites such as Facebook, banning dangerous or 'naughty' websites, preventing people from entering false dates of birth (older and younger people), preventing adults from adding children and young people under the age of 18 years to their 'friends' and increasing the monitoring of children and young people on the internet, evident in the following comments:

'not to allow adults over the age of 25 to add people under the age of 15 on facebook'

'Get every parent to see what their child has been searching.'

'have more controll over sites'

'Pay more attention so no one gets hurt mentally and physiclly.'

'take away the chance of putting phone numbers in social network profiles'

Similar suggestions included having games that were available for children only and could not be used by adults or have social networking sites that were designed specifically for younger children:

'I think that bad adults should all be found and fined for what they do and i also think there should be sites that ONLY children can go on and no adults which would be really safe for kids and they way no adults would get on it would be you would have to put it your young scot card number so no adults could lie'

'facebook in school'

'Let them go on social network sites or create an intranet version of it'

'Create a site like facebook when there is a junior version a teenage version and an adult version'

More specific and complex comments and suggestions include raising awareness and providing greater detail to children and young people, in the form of scare tactics. In addition to this young people requested for more supervision over what they were doing:

'The goverment could have acsess to peoples conversations on the internet and he could e-mail the person and ask if they are okay or need help' or 'make the goverment a computer thingy majig so they cin see wit we r dain' or 'I think they should have some kind of

database that lets them know who everyone is. For example no two people can have the same name'

The children and young people involved in the present study also made important observations and suggestions not only in relation to offenders but also in relation to the Government itself, including suggestions on how they could help with the education of children and young people and the negative aspect of the government:

'harsher punishments on internet offenders'

'the Government could be a dangerous adults'

'get more involved in kids learning'

'create a simulation to see what choices children make in potentially dangerous situations'

In addition to making these requests the children and young people also suggested;

'all paedophiles to be put in jail'

'paedophiles not to be let out of jail'

'do a better and faster job of catching dangerous adults'

'ban dangerous adults form the internet and find out who the dangerous adults are'.

Tied in with the request for an increased Government presence was respondents' indication that they would like more protection to be put in place for them. As mentioned previously, respondents would like to see more safety measures put in place such as blocks or bans on inappropriate websites to protect children and young people.

Stricter rules being put in place to prevent dangerous adults from grooming children and banning adults from accessing children's websites and social networks were also suggested. This could be in the form of developing and implementing effective legislation or ensuring that security measures that were built into social networking sites or any other form of interactive forums were set to opt-out rather than opt-in. It is also necessary, as suggested by UNICEF (2011), that legislation and protective measures be addressed from national, regional and global levels as internet grooming and the dangers associated with the internet were at a global rather than a national level.

Some suggestions were not as straight forward to implement but were just as valuable and worth consideration. Blocking adults from adding young people as friend on Facebook for example, sounds good in practice but would mean that parents would be unable to add their children, preventing them from monitoring their activities. Adult only sites were a popular request but how to ensure that it is only adults who access these sites is difficult to monitor. In addition requests to find and ban or fine all dangerous adults on the internet is an impossible task to achieve considering the anonymity and lack of boundaries or borders associated with the internet.

More intrusive suggestions included having the government access people's internet conversations and with the capacity to email the individual asking if they need help should they feel that the conversation is taking a negative turn. This would involve an invasion of privacy and would not be accepted by everyone. It would, however, help provide the evidence required to arrest an offender under *The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005, Section 1 – Meeting a Child Following Certain Preliminary Contact* (See Chapter Two for further details). According to this legislation the person must have communicated with a child on at least one prior occasion. Unless a child or young person has their device set to record

all messages and they store these messages rather than deleting them, it may be difficult to obtain this evidence on occasion. Monitoring conversations would also be an extremely difficult task to carry out considering how many children and young people there are living in Scotland. In addition to this it was suggested that all paedophiles be placed in jail and never let out and that the government needed to do a quicker job of catching paedophiles, an impossible task to achieve as there is no possible way for the government to know who 'all' the paedophiles are.

Ease of reporting incidents and a more pronounced government presence

Many of the young people's responses involved requests for communications with the Scottish Government and Government bodies to be made easier. These requests manifested in several ways but they all lead to the same conclusion. Young people felt that more should be done to make '*reporting incidents*', '*reporting websites*', '*requesting help*' or '*requesting general information*' much easier, more visible and more readily available whilst ensuring that they '*do not ask children for [personal] information on them*'

The requests made included the government having a '*Facebook/Twitter account*' or having their own '*Blog*' on the topic of internet safety. This would allow children and young people to add them as '*friends*' or '*follow*' them. It would allow for children and young people to share their views and opinions with not only the government but with each other in an environment the government can monitor. In addition to this the following comments were also made:

'make a website showing you what they do, also where people can post their thoughts and feelings. Or ask any questions about the aspect'

'forum or poll'

Further suggestions on how the Government could make reporting easier for children and young people can be seen in the following comments:

'send them an email'

'post links on chat rooms to bullying help websites and i thinks every chat room should have a repot button and a block button and maybe also have a stamp saying that the site is approved by the scottish government'

'website that you can connect to the goverment because there is still alot of dangerous people out in the world and the government arent doing anything about it'.

'way for children to report strange adults messaging them more easily. If we do this, then the Government might be able to weed out Child Pornography sites etc'.

Along with making government communications and contacts more accessible to children and young people in the online environment, requests were made with regards to the offline environment, seen in the comments below:

'make a number up so that people can speek to someone that helps for what ever sichuason that you are in.'

'get more police at schools and after'

'They could possibly have something on at lunchtimes at schools, if you have any worries about the internet you can talk to someone and find a solution to your problem'

These could be regularly updated with information, links and advice about being safe when using the internet. Children and young people could then add them as 'friends' on their social network account or 'follow' them on twitter which would provide them with instant access to all the advice, help and information that they need whenever they need it. It would also allow for open communications to take place between the government and children and young people allowing them to share their views with members of the government and each other in a safe environment. Using a forum, poll, social network site or something similar, according to respondents, would not only allow children and young people to voice their opinion, but to receive acknowledgement that they were being listened to. Children and young people could also receive updates to show that their views have been taken into account and were being considered or implemented when developing new tools and procedures.

An example of an attempt at developing something similar to the suggestion above is seen in a programme currently being undertaken in Wales to address issues of communication which has been evaluated by Beadle and Farrell (2013). CLIC is an information, news and advice website which allows for direct comments, inputs and communications to take place between young people (aged 11-25years) and organisations and practitioners who work with young people on a range of issues. It has been designed so that each local authority in Wales hosts a site which contains locally generated content. They have found that young people were gaining access to mandatory advice and that it was a cost effective means which was showing a regular increase in the number of users who seemed to enjoy using the site.

The overarching message seems to be that children and young people would like see the government being more open about what they were doing or planning to do. This is similar to the findings of Livingstone *et al.* (2012) who suggested that in order to increase trust, how the personal information, privacy settings and safety of children and young people were managed needed to be made transparent to young people. As well as achieving this through the use of social networking methods discussed above, respondents from the current study provided additional examples and suggestions on how this could be achieved. The main opinion was that a stronger government presence needed to be made on the internet. This could be through sending weekly emails through school email accounts, like a government newsletter, or providing an email address children and young people could use to contact the government should they wish to report concerns. Alternative suggestions were to have clear links to the government placed on chatrooms, websites, social networking sites (all aspects of the internet). This would allow for reporting of incidents to become much easier and could include links to help sites such as anti-cyberbullying. Some respondents suggested that the government should develop a stamp which could be placed on websites to allow children and young people to know that the site they were on has been approved by the Scottish Government. These suggestions were linked to the belief that there were still a large number of dangerous adults on the internet and that the government was not doing enough to protect the children and young people of Scotland. This would again support Livingstone *et al.* (2012) who believed that further research was required in order to test, evaluate and refine content classification systems in order to find the most effective method to implement.

The desire for the Scottish Government's presence to be more pronounced on the internet was not only discussed in relation to ease of reporting and communication but

also in relation to advertisement. Suggestions were made that advertisements be provided through several means:

'to advertise the dangers in newspapers, television ect.'

'but more adverts on buses,televisions and computers'

'Get more people putting up posters and more adverts than before then more kids will listen.'

'maby put things through peoples doors , stalls that tell you more and maby make some adverts .'

'The Government should start a advert with different teens favourite celebrities warnign them to be safe on the internet.. Justin Bieber One Direction Nicki Minaj (ECT ECT)'

'Put more stories on the news'

Children and young people believed that there was a lack of information available and that increased advertising would allow children to listen more and raise awareness not only for children but for adults/carers:

'is no advertisement about it'

'It should be a bigger issue so that something can be changed'

'put in on the telly and warn more parents about the awareness, there is already probably been something about it but i think they should keep metioning it and make it more stressful to the parents that this is important'

'send out letters to your parents/carers'

*'Get more people putting up posters and more adverts than before
then more kids will listen'*

*'maybe start more campaigns or charities to help young people be
protected from adults on the internet and give advice'*

A stronger presence in schools was also suggested by some respondents who would like to see more of a police presence in their school and after school. They also suggested having something put in place at lunchtimes where a young person could go and talk to an authoritative person (who is not a teacher) about any problems being experienced on the internet.

An increased presence by the government or authoritative bodies associated with the government (such as police, experts, and specialists) that were not tied to schools and the internet was also suggested. There were numerous requests by respondents for more advertisement, awareness-raising and campaigns to be made which highlighted the potential risks dangerous adults pose to children and young people using the internet. This could be on posters, buses, televisions, radio, through leaflets, newspapers and any other media source. Talking about it more on television, such as through news stories or adverts was a popular suggestion with some going as far as to suggest asking famous people who were popular with children and young people to produce adverts about the dangers of the internet. This does not just have to be associated with the dangers but could also include stronger campaigns which advertise the current safety measures which are currently available to young people but they seem to be unaware of, such as CEOP, IWF and ThinkUKnow. These are all bodies who

state that their mission is to seek to eliminate the risks children face on the internet (CEOP, 2013; IWF, 2013; ThinkUKnow, 2013).

As with the findings about school education in the previous chapter, respondents' claimed that there was not enough information provided for them. Raising awareness through the media would not only be providing necessary information to children and young people but also for their parents and carers. This could, according to respondents, provide a number of opportunities for them to listen which will make sure the message gets through to them. They believe internet safety needed to be made a bigger issue than it was at present. Like Webster *et al.* (2012), the present study found that children and young people needed to be empowered and engaged with issues relating to safety information related to internet use.

Listening to children's opinions

Finally, children and young people in the recent study were clear in indicating that they wanted to be heard, respected and *listened to*:

'respect young people as they do not feel like they are by the government'

'Actually listen because they don't listen to young people'

'Allow children to talk to the government about how they feel about it all :).'

'actually take some action to what we say'

Respondents indicated that children and young people in Scotland want to be *listened to*, not only that they want to be respected (again raising the issue of responsibility).

There was a strong sense of frustration coming from the comments of respondents who felt that the government did not have any respect for children and young people and that they did not listen to them or take action on what they had to say. They would like to be able to talk to members of the government about how they *feel* about safety and protection on the internet and their risk from dangerous adults. It is believed that by listening to the views of children and young people the government would be in a stronger position to place stricter rules on the internet, showing that they care for the safety of the young people of Scotland and strive to be better able to protect them from dangerous adults when using the internet. CEOP has gone some way towards addressing this with their development of the International Youth Advisory Congress (IYAC) which involves 140 youth delegates so that they may give a voice to young people on issues relating to their safety on the internet (CEOP, 2013). How effective this will be is unclear, however, due to the findings of the present study which suggest a large number of children and young people are unaware of CEOP and will therefore be unaware of the IYAC and the work they do, thus preventing them from participating.

Several young people requested that surveys, like the one they had just completed, be given out to children and young people on a regular basis. This view was evident through comments such as:

'I think they should put out a survey like this one and then it should be sent to them and then they should see what young people have to say about being safe in the internet.'

'they should send out a survey to all children in Britain and ask what they think the government could do better instead of listening to adult politicians say because they are not children how are they supposed to

know what we children would like to see happen and they can't just assume because they would be saying what they want to happen and not the children if the government are going to do something that they think will help the children at least ask us our opinions before going ahead for all they know they could be putting something in place that isn't even benefitting us and that is pointless. ask the children not the adults!!'

'well maybe more surveys just to be sure but also i think this survey is perfect for the government to know all about it'

Children and young people also expressed the view that should their views be listened to, it would put the Government in a better position to help:

'put stricter rules in place to prevent dangerous people from operating'

'Do better to protect children from dangerous adults'

'have a care for us'

Several requests were made for more surveys to be carried out which were similar to the one completed for the present study, with some going as far as to suggest the results from the present survey should be given to the government for them to read. Frustration at adult influences and opinions being imposed on children and young people were also highlighted by respondents. This was tied in with the belief that surveys are a good way for the government to gain the thoughts and opinions of children and young people. Making use of surveys could prevent adults in positions of authority, such as politicians or other government bodies, from assuming they know

best and deciding what is or is not good for children and young people. As Stald and Haddon (2008) stated, national governments were at the centre of creating the climate in which research relating to children and the internet could take place. Respondents in the present study believed that if the government was going to put something in place to protect children and young people from dangerous adults on the internet they should ask their opinion before going ahead, otherwise they risked implementing something that was of no benefit to children and young people and was seen as a pointless waste of time.

Finally, when asked if there was anything they would like the government to do so that children and young people could be listened to more about how they would like to be protected from dangerous adults when using the internet, the difficulty in responding to this question was highlighted through comments such as:

'I can't really judge - no one has asked my opinion (until now)'

Awareness of internet safety measures currently in place

The majority of respondents (81% of 808) stated that they were aware of current safety measures in place to help protect them when using the internet. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to state they were aware of current safety measures however this difference was not significant ($X^2=0.318$, $df-1$, $p>.05$). In addition, younger respondents were more likely than older ones to state they were aware of current safety measures but again this difference was not significant ($X^2=14.030$, $df-7$, $p>.05$).

Children and young people were provided with a list of safety measures currently in place and asked if they knew any of them. Contrary to their claims regarding their

knowledge of current safety measures, Table 7.2 highlights that several of these key safety initiatives were largely unheard of:

Table 7.2. Respondent’s knowledge of safety initiatives currently in place on the internet

| | YES | NO |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Internet Watch Foundation | 24% (85 male/63 female) | 76% (199 male/262 female) |
| CEOP | 34% (109 male/101 female) | 65% (172 male /226 female) |
| CEOP ‘Click’ Button | 34% (103 male/98 female) | 66% (172 male/223 female) |
| Report Abuse Buttons | 75% (215 male/224 female) | 25% (70 male/85 female) |
| Privacy Settings | 85% (240 male/283 female) | 15% (47 male/47 female) |
| Social Networking Sites Settings | 63% (175 male/201 female) | 37% (98 male/122 female) |
| ThinkUKnow | 40% (110 male/128 female) | 60% (160 male/270 female) |

Female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to state that they were unaware of the Internet Watch Foundation ($X^2=9.161$, $df-1$, $p<.01$). There was no significant difference between age groups in this regard ($X^2=11.981$, $df-7$, $p>.05$). Female respondents were also significantly more likely than male respondents to state they were unaware of CEOP ($X^2=4.175$, $df-1$, $p<.05$) with older respondents and 12 year olds significantly more likely than the younger ones to state they were unaware of this initiative ($X^2=55.234$, $df-7$, $p<.01$). There was no significant difference between male and female respondents awareness of the CEOP ‘click’ button, however there was a significant difference between age and this regard, with 11 and 13 year olds (P6 and S2) significantly less likely to state they were unaware of this initiative in comparison to the other age groups ($X^2=53.290$, $df-7$, $p<.01$).

Whilst the majority of respondents were unaware of the CEOP 'click' button this was the opposite for report abuse buttons. There was no significant difference between male and female respondents' awareness of the report abuse buttons but older young people were significantly more likely than younger ones to be aware of this feature ($X^2=46.290$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). Older respondents' were also significantly more likely than the younger ones to state that they were aware of privacy settings on the internet ($X^2=45.206$, $df=7$, $p<.01$), there was no significant difference between male and female respondents in this regard. Linked to privacy settings are social networking sites settings. Older respondents' and 11 year olds (P7) were significantly more likely than younger ones to state they were aware of social networking sites security and privacy settings ($X^2=58.441$, $df=7$, $p<.01$), again there was no significant difference between male and female respondents' in this regard.

Finally, older respondents' were significantly more likely than younger ones to state that they were unaware of the ThinkUKnow campaign and website ($X^2=48.381$, $df=7$, $p<.01$). There was again no significant difference between male and female respondents' in this regard.

When asked where they learned about the safety measures that were currently in place (555 responses) school and parents or carers were stated in almost all responses, with some children and young people stating that they learned on their own or with other family members.

Children and young people were asked if they were aware of any other safety measures that are in place on the internet, of the 54 responses anti-virus software, passwords and firewalls were the most frequently indicated. One respondent did have strong views in relation to safety measures on the internet, as seen in the comment below:

'I know none of these except what anybody would do and that's reporting about it but hey nobody is even going to read this because it's done by the council (I would say something before that that started with an f or s but I'm not allowed) all of these so called safety measures that you have are useless and nobody really cares unless you're a complete saddo and all you really need is to report it. Forget all of the other ones they're useless (theres a word in there)'

The majority of respondents claimed to know about current safety measures which are available to help protect them when using the internet; this view was held by children and young people of all age groups and gender. It would appear that when answering this question they were referring to measures such as Report Abuse Buttons and Privacy Setting as over three quarters of respondents claimed to know of these. Some report abuse buttons, however, such as the Virtual Task Force button, require individuals to access their site to report an incident which means children and young people would have to be aware of the site and how to access it without having to navigate through numerous websites (Virtual Global Taskforce, 2013). These types of report abuse buttons were less likely to be known about by children and young people in the present study. Likewise, privacy settings are likely to be site specific which means developing an understanding of the requirements of each site, unless it is general privacy settings which are based on the device accessing the internet rather than the sites being visited (password protection for example). When it came to other initiatives and safety measures (discussed in Chapter One), however, they were less likely to know about them which was concerning considering the time, effort and finances which have gone into promoting these.

The Internet watch Foundation (IWF) was the least well known, with fewer than one quarter of respondents stating that they had heard of it. IWF is classed as the internet hotline for reporting an incident which relates to child sexual abuse content or obscene content. It has a clear 'report' button on the home page which is easily identifiable by anyone who accesses their site and allows for an incident to be reported anonymously and in confidence. IWF have also been nominated for awards because of the work they carry out and have so far acted on 100, 000 child abuse webpages (IWF, 2013). Despite this, they are the least likely place the children and young people who responded to this survey would go to report an incident, which appears to be due to a complete lack of awareness rather than a decision to go elsewhere.

Respondents were slightly more aware of CEOP and the CEOP 'Click' Button in comparison to the IWF, with approximately one third of respondents stating that they had heard of them. CEOP are part of UK law enforcement and state that they use knowledge of children and young people's behaviour, along with the behaviour of sex offenders and the development of new technologies, to deliver protective measures. However, this does not seem to have reached children and young people in Scotland. Whilst these protective measures may be effective and are producing positive results for some children and young people, there needs to be awareness-raising to ensure all children are aware of these tools, how to use them and where to find them and all other information associated with CEOP (CEOP, 2013).

ThinkUKnow, which is an extension of CEOP and designed, advertised and campaigned specifically for children and young people, was known by only forty per cent of respondents. This is an accessible website which has been divided into age appropriate areas (from age 5 to 16 years) as well as areas for parents, carers and

teachers. The site contains age related material which is designed to provide help, advice, information, safety videos and tips and activities. More importantly, each area of the website contains information on how and where to report anything someone feels unsure or uncomfortable about (ThinkUKnow, 2013). According to CEOP's Annual Review (2012-2013) 2.6 million primary and secondary pupils in the UK had access to ThinkUKnow resources. This is therefore an extremely valuable and important site for children and young people; however, only forty per cent of respondents in this study stated that they knew about it. As with their parent site CEOP there is not enough awareness-raising in relation to this site and the numerous benefits associated with it. Much more advertising is required to ensure that all children and young people in Scotland are aware of the site and how to access it which, in turn, will help them educate themselves on issues related to internet safety at a pace and level appropriate to their needs. Another site (which was not referred to by any of the children and young people involved in this study) is Childnet International, which is similar in design to ThinkUKnow in that it has age appropriate areas and contains downloadable and purchasable resources which parents, carers and teachers can use to teach internet safety to young people (Childnet, 2013).

Social networking settings were known by over sixty per cent of respondents which was slightly re-assuring given that the majority of children have a social network account of some kind. However, there were still a large number of respondents who were unaware of these settings. By implementing the privacy settings on social networking sites children and young people can control what information is made available and to whom. Each social networking site (such as Facebook) has their own privacy settings in place which requires that children and young people know how to locate them and set them up correctly (Staysmartonline, 2013).

Tied in with the lack of awareness of safety measures was the request by respondents for the reporting of incidents and websites or requesting help and information to be made readily available at all times for them. As highlighted previously this information is available but it is clearly not reaching young people in Scotland. Current campaigns and promotions may be reaching some children and young people but they are not reaching all. Too many respondents were unaware of the measures discussed above which means they are missing out on valuable tools and information which are there to help keep them safe when using the internet. New approaches to awareness-raising of these sites and tools need to be developed to ensure they reach all children and young people in Scotland who can take full advantage of them and therefore make the internet a safer place to navigate. However, even if all children were aware of and had access to the above safety measures it is still questionable how effective they would be. Davidson, Martelozzo and Lorenz (2009), for example, carried out an evaluation of the above ThinkUKnow programme. They found that young people still appeared willing to disclose personal information and talk with strangers now and in the future despite the safety education they had received. ThinkUKnow appeared to have no effect on the risks young people were willing to take. Davidson, Martelozzo and Lorenz's research was carried out after the safety programme without similar research carried out before the programme was implemented; therefore there was no comparison to be made which would indicate if there was any change in behaviour.

When asked if they were aware of any other safety measure not mentioned in the survey the examples that came up all related to anti-virus software, internet and computer passwords and computer firewalls. Respondents typically learned about safety measures through school and their parents or carers, with some stating that they had learnt them on their own. This appears to suggest that the schools are providing some

level of internet safety teaching to children and young people. What was encouraging was that unlike Webster *et al.* (2012), who found that some young people still had no knowledge of the risks associated with the internet, the respondents from the present study were aware of some form of safety measures and were aware that there were risks associated with using the internet (even if this awareness was limited).

Perceived effectiveness of internet safety measures

With regards to the previously discussed safety measures, female respondents were significantly more likely than male respondents to state that they played a large part in making them feel safe when using the internet whilst male respondents were more likely to state that they were acceptable but more needed to be done ($X^2=7.662$, $df=2$, $p<.05$). Younger respondents and 17 year olds (S6) were significantly more likely than the other age groups to state that current safety measure played a large part in making them feel safe ($X^2=42.669$, $df=14$, $p<.01$). A small number (35/630) of respondents stated that the current safety measures in place did nothing to protect children and young people on the internet.

Since a large number of children and young people had not heard of the safety measures it was difficult for them to expand on their response to the previous question, however, mixed views were expressed by the 87 children and young people who did provide a response:

'I don't think that they're doing anything to me. If you were to turn this around then you would have to take facebook and twitter and social networking sites like that away and I don't think that theres anything getting done. You're just saying that to try to look good. I don't think that theres any problem with the internet except maybe

that people can be a bit stupid and give out personal information and that theres some people that are s.....s and take advantage of it yet nothing ever ges done about it.'

'i think they are good because i feel protected'

'They are useful but children need to feel safe that they will improve things and not make them worse.'

'they are good but there is no way to find a balance between safe and being fun'

'i feel these safey measures take part in keeping children safe as the buttons are always there if a stranger/friend was to be abusive online, but also it is upto children and young people to make sure they know exactly who the person is they are speaking to and to make sure it is safe to talk to them.'

'They dont protect that much because nowone even feels safe on their websites'

'It doesnt help at all realy and thats my opinion!'

'I am not concerned, As a seasoned internet user. I Know whats dangerous better than any school can teach. Experience.'

Some of these responses could be linked to the lack of awareness of some of the safety measures discussed previously. This supports the suggestions of Livingstone *et al.* (2011) that the government should ensure that information resources were made to reach the 'information-poor' (p.44).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the children and young people in the present study again demonstrated their ability to produce detailed, relevant and well thought out suggestions and opinions. There were mixed feelings in relation to the government but this was mainly due to a lack of awareness as to what the government was currently doing to protect them from dangerous adults on the internet. They have clearly indicated their desire to be protected but, rather than have this imposed on them, they would like to be active participants in their own protection and security when using the internet.

Key Findings:

- Nineteen percent of respondents believed that the Scottish Government was doing enough to listen to children and young people's opinions on being protected from dangerous adults when using the internet.
- Many respondents claimed that they were unaware of what the government currently does or is doing with regards to protecting children and young people on the internet.
- Two hundred and seventy-six respondents suggested they would like the Government to do more so that children and young people can be listened to more, suggestions included: Imposing restrictions, raising awareness and harsher punishments, ease of reporting incidents and a more pronounced Government presence, and listening to children's opinions.
- Eighty-one percent of respondents stated that they were aware of current safety measures in place to help protect them when using the internet.
- More than 60% of respondents had not heard of internet protection sites/ and measures such as, CEOP, ThinkUKnow and Internet Watch Foundation.

- Social networking settings were known by over sixty per cent of respondents.
- The majority of respondents' stated that currently safety measures played a large part in making them feel safe, only 35/630 suggested this was not the case.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The continuing advancement in new technology which children and young people are using to access the internet has led to an increase in concerns surrounding their safety when online. The aim of this study was to gain a greater understanding of children and young people's thoughts on protection and security when using the internet so that it may provide us with more detailed knowledge of the risks of grooming faced by those young people who regularly access the internet. Each question will be presented and the findings from the present study will be related to the wider literature in order to address the main research question: *What are children and young peoples' views about the risks they face on the internet and how can they be used to help protect them from being groomed by dangerous adults?*

The young people involved in the present study not only indicated their ability and willingness to contribute to society through their suggestions and recommendations but also through their desire to be listened to and involved in their own internet safety education. A large amount of information was gathered which was informative, detailed and full of rich insights into their views. Whilst it is acknowledged that undertaking research with children and young people raises ethical concerns this study has shown that it is possible, providing care and consideration is applied throughout the research process. The quality of information provided by the young people in this study complements and contributes to the growing body of research in this area, such as Murray (2000;2005), Corsaro (2005), Lobe *et al.* (2009), and HMIE (2011).

Where, with what and with whom do children and young people access the internet?

Findings from the present study support the findings from previous studies which suggested that the internet has become an integral part of young people's lives which is accessed on a regular basis (Livingstone *et al.*, 2011; Scott, 2011; Mascheroni and Olafsson, 2014). Over 96% of respondents stated that they had access to the internet at home, however, more than three quarters of respondents' claimed to access the internet on their own in comparison to a little over one quarter who stated that they accessed the internet with parents or carers. This would support previous findings that whilst accessing the internet via mobile devices is becoming more common, the most common place of use is still the home (Livingstone *et al.*, (2011); Webster, 2012; Olafson *et al.*, 2013). Young people in this present study indicated, however, a lack of protection on their devices and a lack of supervision. Whether this was because their parents trusted them, did not know how to install protective monitoring software or had installed software that the young person was not aware of was unclear.

When asked what the top three things were that they participated in most when accessing the internet social networking, gaming, and YouTube were the most frequent responses given by young people with homework coming in fourth. These findings are similar to those of the UK Safer Internet Centre and the European online Grooming Project which both found that there was an increased use of social networking sites and online gaming by children and young people accessed via laptops and mobile devices (Webster *et al.*, 2012; Broadbent *et al.*, 2013).

The findings were also congruent with Peter *et al.*'s (2005) research on online friendship formation. Peter *et al.* found that online friendship formation was more

complex than had been assumed and was influenced by self-disclosure, frequency of communications and motive for social compensation, all of which were affected by personality. This present study did not look at friendship formation as such but the explanations provided by respondents' regarding the difference between strangers and friends they have never met before indicates the complexities involved when adding friends during online communications. The fact that the results were similar across the different age groups suggests this process starts from a young age and is not something that develops as children get older. However, further research is required to investigate this claim.

The present finding that internet use by young people is becoming increasingly private and mobile would suggest that opportunities for potential abusers may have increased. Added to this was the willingness of some children and young people to disclose several pieces of personal information and to go on to meet people face-to-face. Taking into consideration that some abusers communicate with young people in an attempt to arrange to meet them in real life, this could be seen as almost paving the way for abusers. Whilst it is only a small percentage of participants who claimed to behave in this manner when using the internet, if these results were to be generalised to all children and young people in Scotland, it would result in a large pool of potential victims.

A finding in the present study of particular relevance is that children and young people are increasingly accessing the internet in private, using mobile devices. This could suggest that several offenders will quickly come to the conclusion, using rational choice theory or the risk assessment stage of O'Connell's (2004) cycle of abuse, that the benefits do outweigh the cost (as their risk of detection decreases). Added to this is the

anonymity of the internet which decreases the risk of being identified and detected even further.

The findings from the present study highlight the complex nature of internet use by children and young people. The increase in mobile devices used to access the internet and respondents' claim that they accessed the internet in private raises concerns regarding the risks they may be exposing themselves to. Taking into consideration that social networking was one of the top three things respondents' claimed to use the internet for, their willingness to add people they have never met before on to their 'friends' list and the disclosure of personal information they claimed to have divulged previously or plan to do so in the future, children and young people in Scotland are putting themselves at risk of harm of being groomed by child sex abusers on the internet on a regular basis. The risk of harm young people are putting themselves in is further exacerbated by their complex but dangerous understanding of 'strangers' on the internet.

What are their views on engaging in risky behaviour and being exposed to risk from others?

The children and young people involved in this study had various views regarding risk taking and being exposed to risk. These were mainly in the form of exposure to risk from paedophiles, sex abusers, and dangerous adults (see Chapter Four). Cyberbullying was mentioned but only by a minority of respondents, none of whom claimed themselves to have been bullied whilst on the internet. There were also a very small number of respondents who made reference to computer hacking or identity theft as a possible risk that could be faced by other children and young people who accessed the internet, though they did not necessarily do so as a result of personal experience.

The present results are consistent with Davidson and Gottschalk's (2011) findings that some children and young people are willing to participate in risky activities such as interacting with strangers and adding them as friends to their social network accounts. Davidson and Gottschalk's findings suggest this behaviour will be continued despite young people receiving internet safety training, although no mention of this was made by the respondents from the present study. A small number of the respondents from the present study did, however, indicate their willingness to participate in risky behaviour in the future. This could suggest that they are willing to continue their behaviour despite receiving internet safety training but considering respondents' lack of awareness of current safety measures there appears to be an alternative reason for their behaviour, which warrants further research. Livingstone (2008) found that when using social networking sites teenagers claimed to be more likely to use other modes of communication (on or offline) rather than compromise their privacy too far. However, this was a small sample size (n=16) limiting the generalisability of the findings. The participants in the present study stated that they use several forms of communication such as messenger, social networks and emails but there was no clear indication that this was used to secure their privacy.

There is ample evidence that young children are more likely than older children to have a social networking profile which is public and are less likely than older children to fully understand the protective features in social networking sites to be able to use them adequately (Livingstone and colleagues 2008, 2009, 2009, 2010, 2010, 2010, 2011, 2011, 2012; Stald and Haddon, 2008; Olafsson *et al.*, 2013; Mascheroni and Olafsson, 2014. With increased involvement of children in research being encouraged by the government there is evidence of some changes. Stald and Haddon (2008) found that the government was at the centre of creating a climate in which research relating to children

and young people takes place. The present study found that the large majority of respondents from all age groups claimed to know about privacy settings on the internet which could suggest that there has been an improvement in children's understandings of these measure or that parents are ensuring that safety measures are in place when allowing their child to open a social network account. However, when presented with a list of current safety measures the majority of respondents' claimed to be unaware of key bodies such as CEOP, IWF and Childnet which contradicts their previous claims and could suggest that their knowledge of safety measures comes from somewhere other than the Government. The increase in research involving children and young people in these subject areas, as indicated by Stald and Haddon (2008), could suggest that the government is taking a positive approach and encouraging more research to be carried out; which is supported by the findings of Olafsson *et al.* (2013) and Mascheroni and Olafsson (2014). The results of the present study, however, could suggest otherwise as many participants claimed that they did not know what the government was doing to protect them and suggested they '*put out a survey like this one and then it should be sent to them and then they should see what young people have to say about being safe in the internet*'.

Some respondents in the present study identified young people who have already experienced physical or sexual abuse as being at risk and in need of protection when using the internet and believed that these young people were more likely than those who have not been exposed to physical or sexual abuse to communicate with and arrange to meet with strangers as a result of their vulnerability. This is congruent with Wells and Mitchell's (2008) suggestion that high-risk young people who had experienced physical or sexual abuse were more likely than other children and young people to talk to people they had never met before when using the internet and less likely to communicate with

their friends. CEOP (2013), have developed an International Youth Advisory Congress which developed a global online charter which allowed those involved to provide a list of recommendations of how children and young people feel agencies and corporations should keep them safe when using the internet. Unfortunately the findings from the present survey would suggest that the effectiveness of these recommendations is difficult to assess. The majority of respondents' claimed not to have heard of CEOP or any of its affiliates, therefore, were not in a position to comment on the contents of this charter. In addition, the effectiveness of this charter is also unclear as the children and young people in this study were not aware of their work which would suggest they were not implementing any safety measures which were the outcome of the charter. If, as suggested by the respondents of this study, there are vulnerable people at risk of communicating with strangers online then the work carried out by CEOP (and any other body which aims to protect young people) should be more visible on the internet and promoted regularly to young people. This does not mean that the current bodies in place do not promote their websites at present but that an alternative approach to advertising or awareness-raising may be required to ensure all young people are aware of their role in protecting them when on the internet.

The identification by May-Chahal *et al.* (2012) that children and young people were vulnerable to internet identity deception was reflected in the present study. Respondents' were very aware of the use of deception when communicating on the internet and believed that younger children were the ones most at risk. When explaining the difference between 'online strangers' and 'offline strangers' and the difference between 'online strangers' and 'online friends they have never met before' respondents' supported the claims made by May-Chahal *et al.* that young people use their everyday methods used in the outside environment and apply these to the online

environment; which may affect their judgements when communicating online. The young people involved in the present study were willing to accept 'friends they had never met before' on to their social network pages (especially if they were already on the 'friends list' of someone they knew) and saw online strangers as a lesser threat than face-to-face strangers.

When taking into consideration that there are some children who have been recruited by child sex offenders to recruit and coerce other potential child victims then the findings from the present study regarding children and young people's attitudes towards 'friends they have never met before', and their lack of risk associated with them, raises several concerns about their safety when using the internet. Taking into consideration internet groomers' ability to instruct potential child victims on how to hide communications and file transfers, pursuing legal action can become increasingly difficult. The recording of communications (as is available with private chats such as MSN) was not an issue raised by any of the respondents in this study when discussing protection and security on the internet (Calder, 2004; O'Connell, 2004). This may be because they did not know the function existed or it may be because they did not see this as a safety feature. It may also be because initial communications with online child sex abusers are friendly and are not seen as discussions which require recording. By the time the young person finds themselves in a uncomfortable or dangerous position they may feel that they are no longer in a position to record their communication as they have not recorded them from the initial contact and, as discussed in Chapter Five, they now feel responsible or worried they make the situation worse.

Looking at the results of this study in relation to typologies of online groomers, discussed in Chapter Two, several observations can be made. Martellozzo's (2012) hyper-confident groomer will attempt to attract potential child victims by playing to

their curiosity. The findings of the present study suggest that there may be some children and young people who would add these offenders to their account. Some respondents suggested that the lack of information provided in school internet safety lessons may result in children participating in risky behaviour on the internet. According to respondents, being told not to go on certain websites and not to behave in a certain way without being given an explanation as to why they should not results in some children deliberately participating in these activities, as they are curious to see what will happen if they do. If teachers were to explain the reasons behind their instruction this may result in a reduction in this type of behaviour which will lower the risks children and young people face from these offenders as their curiosity will have diminished.

Martellozzo's (2012) hyper-cautious offender on the other hand may be slightly more difficult to protect children and young people from due to their cautious behaviour. This could suggest that they take the rational choice theory approach to grooming children, discussed in Chapter Two, as they spend time making sure the risks of being detected are minimal and therefore the benefits outweigh the cost. Respondents in the present study indicated their awareness of deception being used by child sex abusers on the internet but did not really discuss how they attempted to identify this when using the internet. Whilst the majority of respondents were clear in acknowledging their awareness of dangerous adults on the internet and claimed to feel a little or very unsafe from harm from adults they did not know, there was no mention of their ability to identify and avoid contact with dangerous adults using deception when online. This would suggest that they may add dangerous adults who they believed to be other children as friends on their social network accounts as they would be perceived as 'friends they have never met before' rather than strangers.

What would affect their willingness to report potentially dangerous incidents?

Reporting potentially dangerous incidents could be affected by a number of issues. Rather than discussing their willingness or not, however, respondents discussed their lack of knowledge on how to report incidents or their own responsible nature which meant that they would not need to report any incidents. Lack of knowledge and taking responsibility for their own actions would, in turn, be expected to have an effect on their willingness to report any incidents.

The 'sexual' stage of the grooming cycle (and the final stage for O'Connell) is where the offender will turn the conversation into a highly sexual nature and will start asking the child about their experiences in this area (O'Connell, 2004; Gillespie, 2008). Considering that some young people in the present study claimed that they would not know what to do if they experienced something uncomfortable or that they would do nothing through fear of making things worse it is easy to see how some children and young people could unintentionally find themselves in potentially dangerous situations. Added to this is respondents' lack of awareness of current safety measures available to them, which could help explain why several child sex abusers go undetected when grooming children on the internet.

The final stage of the cycle, according to Gillespie (2008), is the 'physical contact' stage. This stage ties in with Calder's (2004) suggestion that internet groomers can instruct potential child victims on how to hide communications and file transfers which also ties into Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD of simplifying the task. Taking into account the stages prior to this stage it is likely that the offender has already progressed to a 'friend they have never met before' in the child's view. This could mean that the child has already taken advice from the abuser and deleted or hidden any and all communication

between them. In addition, fear of making things worse or not knowing what to do when experiencing something uncomfortable on the internet, tied in with those respondents who claimed they would go on to meet people face-to-face now and in the future, would suggest there are a number of children who are finding themselves at risk of being physical abused by online groomers. Those offenders who restrict their behaviour to the online environment can only be reasonably confident that they can continue their behaviour without the risk of being detected or reported by children and young people. There is clearly a need for more awareness-raising in the areas of disclosure and communicating with strangers when using the internet. Children and young people need to be taught or informed about all safety measures currently available to them to help keep them safe when using the internet. In addition they need to be shown how to locate the tools necessary to report any situation they are unsure of or makes them feel uncomfortable. Making these tools more prominent and easier to access will help keep children and young people safe online.

In order for current legislation relating to internet grooming to be effective (see Chapter Two for details) children and young people need to be informed of the importance of keeping a record of all their communications, regardless of the device they are using. For them to be in a position to do this industries need to ensure that any online communication applications they develop (such as chat rooms or social networking sites) have facilities for recording, including video recordings from webcams. These facilities should be incorporated into the applications as default and should be designed so that they come with an opt-out approach, meaning that recordings automatically take place unless the function has been disabled by the user. Providing these recordings were stored in the 'cloud' rather than the actual device being used (therefore eliminating any issues relating to storage space) this would allow for all communication

involving children and young people to be used as evidence of communications when necessary. Respondents from the present study also support the findings of Mitchell *et al.* (2001) that over three quarters of their respondents had not heard of places where they could report unwanted incidents. This reinforces the claims made in this thesis that much more needs to be done to raise awareness of the safety measures currently available to children and young people using the internet.

In contrast, however, there were a number of respondents who believed that they were more than capable of behaving responsibly on the internet and were confident in their ability to deal with any situation that arose. They believed that they were educated enough to deal with any situation and knew what to do should they experience anything uncomfortable, harmful or potentially dangerous. What they did not do is show their knowledge and explain what it is that they would do. It was more a case of '*dealing with it in their own way*'. This may or may not be a good thing. If by being responsible they mean taking all necessary safety precautions when using the internet and using the tools available to them to report any uncomfortable incidents, as and when they occur, then this is a positive step forward and indicates children and young people are developing the skills necessary to minimise any risks they face when using the internet. If, however, they mean finding their own way to deal with the situation which entails keeping it to themselves, not reporting it and risking the situation escalating then there could, potentially, be many children and young people in Scotland who are participating in risky behaviour on the internet.

What are their views regarding personal information on the internet; do they believe it is safer to give out personal details or to keep this type of information hidden?

There appeared to be mixed and contradictory views about the disclosure of personal information. Almost all respondents claimed to believe that it was safer to keep information safe with only five per cent believing it was safer to give out information. Upon first glance this would appear to be a positive viewpoint, with children and young people being strongly aware of keeping their person information to themselves. When looked at more closely, however, this does not appear to be the case (see Chapter Four).

Looking at the findings from this study in relation to O'Connell's (2004) cycle of cybergrooming (see Chapter Two), several observations can be made. The 'friendship' forming stage can be seen as relating to child sex abusers' behaviour in chatrooms and communication discussed previously. As the findings of the present study have highlighted, some young people were not only willing to disclose photographs of themselves but also those of their friends and family. Whilst it may only be general photographs that are requested which have no sexual element to them, they are more than enough to satisfy the groomer's requirements at this stage (and allow for identification of the child). These young people are at risk of being blackmailed and bullied by abusers who will place the blame on the young person by stating that they provided the photographs therefore they are responsible for the situation they find themselves in. Alternatively the abuser may threaten to show the photographs to others or contact their parents and implicate the young person as being the instigator of the communications.

The next stage of the grooming cycle, the 'relationship' forming stage, is a stage which is only used by those offenders who wish to remain in contact with the potential child victim (O'Connell, 2004; Gillespie, 2008). Some respondents from the present study indicated their willingness now and in the future to disclose the name of the school they went to, their address and the name of the clubs they attended, all of which provide the offender with the information they need to locate the child with the intention of meeting them (willingly or unwillingly). Added to this is the distinction made by children and young people between strangers and people they have never met before. If a child communicates with a stranger and becomes friends with them, the stranger then moves into the 'friends they have never met before' category. This gives the child a false sense of security as, according to the views expressed in the present study, they do not class themselves as being at risk from this group. They may find themselves unwittingly disclosing personal information which can be used to draw the child further into the communications and they may find the nature of these communications become more sexual. As with the previous stage in the cycle the information disclosed by the young people could be held against them by the abuser so that they feel they are unable to break the communications or disclose the situation and seek help from an adult.

The conversations about school and home life are then used to move forward into the 'risk assessment' stage (O'Connell, 2004; Gillespie, 2008). Because children and young people's use of the internet has now become more private and more mobile the risk assessment stage is not as risky for offenders as it once was. The chances of a potential child victim using a computer in an area in which adults are present have been dramatically reduced and the chances of them accessing the internet outside the home have increased. This could result in the possibility of this aspect of the cycle of

cybergrooming being eliminated, making the cycle smaller, quicker and easier for abusers.

The 'exclusivity' stage is where abusers begin to change the tempo of their communications with a potential child victim (O'Connell, 2004; Gillespie, 2008). This again links to the idea of the abuser moving from being classed as a stranger by a child or young person to being a friend they have never met before. The issue of trust and the idea of them being best friends further emphasises the belief that they are not a risk to the child. As with previous stages this stage can provide the child with a false sense of security and safety when communicating with the offender and potentially increases their likelihood of communicating with them using multiple devices. This could result in the young person arranging to meet with the abuser face-to-face in the outside environment (on their own if they are following the abusers instructions).

What are children and young people's views about whether and how they need to be protected from dangerous adults when using internet communication tools?

The majority of children and young people believed that they should be kept safe when using the internet, whether that was from dangers adults or any other risk associated with internet use. There was, however, a clear gap in knowledge of current safety measures which were in place to provide them with the help and tools necessary to keep safe when using the internet. Major initiatives such as CEOP, IWF and ThinkUKnow were largely unheard of by the majority of respondents. This was despite the claims made by these initiatives that they were reaching children across the UK and that they were successful in their attempt to reduce the incidences of internet child sex abuse. It is therefore essential that more is done to raise awareness of these initiatives among children and young people, especially in Scotland.

There are new initiatives being developed such as Isis and ICOP. These are important safety measures which are being developed which are an ethics-centred monitoring framework and a forensic software toolkit. Both are designed to help law enforcement agencies. Whilst these are valuable initiatives they are not designed to be used by the children and young people themselves. However, it may be worthwhile drawing their attention to them so that they know that something is being done to keep them safe when using the internet. A large number of respondents' claimed that they did not know what the Government was doing at present to help keep them safe when they were using the internet. If they were to be informed of new safety developments, such as Isis and ICOP this would help provide a more transparent approach to the internet safety of young people and would allow them to realise that there are initiatives in place which are there to protect them which are running in the background unnoticed by all users of the internet (regardless of age and intention).

Findings from the present study would appear to contradict those obtained in research carried out in England by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Synovate UK Ltd, 2009). The researchers suggested that children aged 5-17 were not majorly concerned about internet safety and appeared confident that they would know what to do if they were to experience any harmful content whilst on the internet. By contrast, respondents from the present study were concerned about their internet safety education and a number of young people claimed that they would not know what to do if they were to experience anything uncomfortable. This would appear to support the previous suggestion that there is a difference in internet safety knowledge and education between Scotland and England (see Chapter Six). Further research in this area is warranted to establish the validity of this claim.

If, as Leung (2007) suggests, information could be made readily available online for young people who wish to investigate issues that are important to them then they may feel that support is available to them. This could help eliminate the concerns raised in the present study that many young people claimed they would not know what to do if they found themselves in an uncomfortable situation and would be reluctant to report it for fear of the consequences. Feeling confident when using the internet and a reduced fear of risk, dangers or uncomfortable situations would also allow young people to use the internet as a positive coping strategy as suggested by Leung.

The findings from the present study suggest that current educational approaches to internet safety teaching need to be re-evaluated to represent the current behaviour of young people on the internet. Previous research has suggested that educational programmes need to target younger people. Blocking sites is not enough to protect young people, external and internal influences need to be taken into account and more knowledge of young people's online behaviour is necessary in order to develop effective and meaningful educational programmes (Davidson and Gottschalk, 2011; Scott, 2011; Webster *et al.*, 2012). These suggestions were supported by the findings of the present study, which indicated that accessing the internet was becoming more mobile, which would indicate it was not enough to teach 'computer' internet safety as this may not be the main device being used by young people. Young People are accessing the internet at an increasingly younger age and respondents in the present study suggest that this may make them more vulnerable to internet dangers and more susceptible to external and internal influences. This would suggest that a more flexible pedagogical approach to internet safety lessons is required.

Finally, unlike the respondents of the UK Safer Internet centre (2012) who discussed their opinions on rights and responsibilities, respondents' repeatedly raised the issue of

their own responsibility. Whilst, like the UK Safer Internet Centre, they saw parents as being responsible for their children and requested that more be done to ensure that safety tools that were available to them were more prominent they were also keen to highlight their own ability to be responsible. Some respondents felt that they had been educated enough, that they were more than capable of participating in the safe use of the internet and could take care of any uncomfortable situation as and when they arise.

What are the implications for protecting children and young people from dangerous adults and the risk of being groomed?

This study suggests that access to the internet has become easier and more available to the children and young people of Scotland in both rural and urban areas. The frequency at which children and young people access the internet along with the increasingly private and mobile way in which it is being accessed suggests that keeping them safe from dangerous adults and the risk of being groomed is vital.

It is unrealistic to place responsibility on one body of people such as parents, the Government, industry and the children and young people themselves. A collaboration of responsibility is necessary for the effective implementation of safety advice, tools and implementations which includes and acknowledges children and young people's role in keeping safe when using the internet.

Open communications between young people and their parents or carers

Encouraging open communications between young people and their parents or carers can help ensure that they feel comfortable reporting any incidents or discussing any concerns they may have when accessing the internet either in the home or when outside

the home. This supports Fleming *et al.*'s (2006) argument that better parent-child communications need to be developed in relation to issues of internet safety awareness.

Parents could make more use of parental controls or alternative methods of supervision and monitoring of their children's activities on the internet. This is not a complete solution but may go some way toward reducing the number of risks faced by children on the internet which are associated with dangerous adults (and other potentially harmful risks). In order for this to be possible, however, tools will need to be developed which are affordable, easy to install, set-up and monitor and are compatible with the numerous devices used by children and young people to access the internet; such as laptops, tablets, iPod's and smartphones. These tools also have to be developed to suit users of all ages in order to account for any generation gap in technological knowledge.

Internet safety lessons in schools

Children and young people should be given the opportunity to learn or be taught about the correct use of the internet. This includes the importance of good practice skills that are necessary to guide positive social interactions. Informing children and young people about the importance of care and consideration will empower them, allowing them to become responsible users of the internet and providing them with the skills to avoid getting into potential situations which involve dangerous adults.

Due to the inconsistency reported by respondents' in relation to their internet safety education in schools, clear, age-appropriate lessons are required. These should contain informative, necessary and relevant topics as well as ensuring that all children and young people are made aware of the help, resources and tools that are currently

available to not only help protect them from dangerous adults but any other risks associated with using internet communication tools.

Children and young people who claim they know how to behave responsibly on the internet and are capable of taking care of any situation that may arise should be asked to explain their approach to internet use. This will allow parents or teachers to assess whether or not they are, indeed, behaving safely when using the internet. Children and young people who are identified as using good internet safety practices could pass this information on to peers; either through assisting in school safety lessons or when communicating with peers online. Including them in the safety lessons will not only help empower more children and young people with the knowledge required to keep safe online but it will let young people know that teachers are willing to include them in the delivery of their education.

Awareness-raising and ease of access to internet safety tools

Given the lack of awareness of current safety measure in place for children and young people in Scotland, reporting tools need to be made much more accessible and stand out more on websites. They also need to be child friendly and clearly state what they should be used for and how to report an incident. There is also a need for a stronger presence on report buttons which are easily located on all websites likely to be accessed by children and young people, with their access on the main page rather than located elsewhere in the website.

The lack of awareness of safety measures all call for greater awareness-raising outside of the school environment, through the likes of adverts on websites, letters sent home with pupils or leaflets sent to the home. This could ensure children and young people who are not at school (through absence, truancy or any other reason) are made aware of

the measures in place to keep them safe from dangerous adults and the risk of being groomed. Having industries take a more proactive approach to raise awareness will also help ensure that all children and young people in Scotland are made aware of the safety measure available to protect when using the internet.

Government and industries involvement in internet safety

The government could also work more closely with industry to ensure that monitoring tools or policies are clear and transparent and that regular monitoring takes place. This will allow for their effectiveness to be maintained and for any developments that are required to take place immediately. In order for this to work at its full potential it would be worthwhile including children and young people in any consultation. This ensures both the Government and industry are aware of current internet behaviour and needs of young people. It will also keep communications open with young people which will allow for a transparent approach to keeping them safe from dangerous adults whilst building trust with them at the same time.

The main implications revolve around awareness-raising and empowerment for children and young people. What is important is that any developments or implementations which are carried out to keep children safe from dangerous adults and the risk of being groomed when using the internet need to be done in collaboration and age-appropriate. As Whittle *et al.*'s (2013) suggest, young people cannot be protected by one body in isolation (such as parents) but require a community of education to help keep them safe on the internet.

What are children and young peoples' views about the risks they face on the internet and how can they be used to help protect them from being groomed by dangerous adults?

The children and young people involved in this study indicated that they were very much aware of dangerous adults on the internet, referring to them as 'paedo's' or 'sex abusers' or 'creeps'. By contrast, the risk of cyberbullying or hacking was rarely acknowledged.

The children and young people in the present study requested that they be given more detailed information about paedophiles in their internet safety lessons but that these lessons contain accurate information about paedophiles rather than trying to protect children by sheltering them from discussions of this nature. They also did not wish to be given an '*exaggerated version of the truth*' in an attempt to '*scare*' them but rather an informative lesson which raised their awareness of the dangers of using the internet but also informed them that there are protective measure they can take which minimised their likelihood of being groomed and that grooming does not happen to every young person. In addition, respondents' requested age-appropriate lessons on a regular basis. This chimes with Burn and Whillet's (2004) suggestion that the current understanding of paedophilia was based on deep rooted 'folkloric' understandings which were disproportionate to the actual threat posed. As a result adults are offering skewed warnings of dangers and causing unnecessary anxiety in children. They argued that long-term media education was required which allowed children and young people to explore different levels of risk which would make them more confident and self-aware when online.

When discussing the dangers faced by children and young people respondents acknowledged that if they did not keep safe then they could be at risk of being hurt or they could put their family at risk of being hurt. The concept of 'grooming' was raised by a small number of older children; however, it was raised as something that could happen without any explanation of what it entails. There were a number of respondents who indicated there was a gap in their knowledge. They understood that they were exposed to risks when using the internet and they understood that there was a need for safety measures to be put in place, however there was a lack of detail in their knowledge. They did not know why certain behaviours were safe or unsafe as this aspect was not explained clearly enough to them. This lack of knowledge may result in some young people becoming curious and taking unnecessary risks when using the internet. The results of the current study made it clear that young people were aware of the terminology such as pedo's, grooming, abusers and dangerous adults but that they lacked an accurate understanding of these concepts. This may be because, as adults, there is a desire to protect young people from such things which results in them becoming 'taboo' topics which are hidden from young people. Unfortunately, this results in young people looking elsewhere for the information, such as the internet. Therefore instead of protecting young people adults are putting them at risk as are developing an inaccurate understanding of the concept and by typing word such as 'pedo', 'abuser', 'child' and 'sex' into a search engine they are at greater risk of communicating with dangerous adults.

Rather than protecting children and young people from finding out about the issues relating to internet child abuse it may be more beneficial to discuss these issue in more detail. That is not to say that educators should exaggerate or attempt to scare children and young people by telling them worst case scenario stories of children who have been

abused as a result of internet grooming. Rather that they should take an open and transparent approach to discussions on the topic. If respondents were provided with more information and a more detailed explanation of why they should or should not use the internet in a particular way this could help promote trust which could mean that children and young people would be more likely to discuss any uncomfortable situation they experienced with an appropriate adult.

Children and young people's awareness of the use of deception by dangerous adults on the internet could be used to highlight the importance of keeping personal information personal. If it is clearly explained to children and young people that internet child sex abusers use deception when communicating with children and young people in order to keep their identity and location hidden so that they may not be detected, it may help them understanding why they should behave in a similar manner. If they understand the concept of deception clearly, they may be more likely to keep their personal information hidden.

In addition, when giving out safety messages relating to disclosure of information it is important that this is not only targeted towards strangers. It is clear from this study that safety lessons need to include all the individuals or 'friends' they can meet on the internet and that the dangerous adult warnings apply to all and not just strangers. Using good practice when on the internet at all times, such as keeping personal information personal, will reduce the likelihood of internet child sex abusers sourcing potential child victims.

Some respondents, however, did not feel that they were at risk when using the internet as they were responsible users and knew how to look after themselves. They believed they were more than capable of keeping themselves safe and knew what to do should an

uncomfortable situation come up. They also believed they had the right to freedom and independence. The notion of responsibility was reflected throughout the present study with young people indicating their desires not to be treated as ‘children’ but rather as responsible and active members of society reflecting the suggestion throughout this thesis that young people should be active participant in research.

These are just examples of ways in which children and young people’s views about the risks they face on the internet can be used to help protect them from being groomed by dangerous adults. There are numerous other possible approaches which can be taken which are highlighted in several other chapters and sections of this thesis.

Vygotsky, ZPD, and the concept of Scaffolding

In Chapter Three the Zone of Proximal Development and Scaffolding were identified as a helpful framework for understanding internet behaviour with the different aspects of these theories discussed in relation to the behaviour of potential child sex abusers. Here the findings are considered in that framework.

Vygotsky was interested in the role that sociocultural contexts played in cognitive development. The creation of the internet and the advancement in technology of mobile and portable devices has led to a new set of tools being made available for children to use and a new set of interactions for children to participate in (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff & Morelli, 1998; Berryman *et al.*, 2002; Li & Atkins’, 2004). How these tools could be implemented by internet child sex abusers to work with children within their zone of proximal development have previously been discussed in Chapter Two. However, these same tools can also be used to work within a child’s zone of proximal development in order to help keep them safe from potential offenders when using the

internet. What follows is a discussion of the six features of scaffolding in relation to the findings from this study:

Encourage the Child's Interest in the task

All respondents accessed the internet regularly using a number of different devices and locations; therefore they were already interested in using the internet. The findings from the present study indicated that respondents' would like to be protected from dangerous adults when using the internet and believed that they should be protected. Some respondents also indicated that internet safety lessons could be dull and boring and contain content they believed to be irrelevant and of no benefit to them. In addition to this was the inconsistency reported by respondents' across schools of what, how and when internet safety lessons took place. This would suggest that young people are interested and desire lessons on internet safety and that this should be an integral part of their education.

If the suggestions made by respondents were followed, some of the issues above may be eliminated and children and young people may become more interested in participating in internet safety lessons. Targeting younger children and making lessons age appropriate so that internet lessons are relevant and the content being discussed is important and understandable to the target audience will help to encourage their interest. Listening to children and young people's opinions and inviting them to participate in the development of internet safety lessons will also encourage their interest in the task.

Providing more informative (for example details of the behaviour used by potential child sex abusers) and relevant lessons to children (including younger children) would help them to access the internet knowing about the risks and the consequences

associated with these risks. This could help reduce the curiosity of children and young people which in turn could reduce the likelihood of them accepting potential child sex abusers as friends on their social networking sites; reducing the effectiveness and success rate of the approaches used by hyper-confident and to a lesser extent hyper-cautious groomers.

Simplify the task by reducing the number of possible actions that the child could carry out

This stage can be reached by taking on board some of the suggestions made by respondents in relation to the Government (discussed in Chapter Seven). Reporting of incidents and access to websites where help and information could be requested at all times by young people was a popular request made by respondents. Making report buttons more prominent and visible on all pages rather than only available on certain website (and hidden within these sites) will allow children to instantly report an incident making it easier for them – especially younger children - rather than overly complicated.

Developing internet safety lessons which contain scenarios for children to work through in their teacher's presence was also requested by a number of respondents which will help simplify the options available to children and young people as they can work through the scenario with the help of their teacher who will help them realise the safest option by eliminating potentially dangerous options (in the presence of the young person). By making lessons clearer and more practical and making help and advice more readily available children and young people will become more empowered. This will allow them to gain knowledge of what they need do to report an incident, making it standard practice rather than a list of options on how to deal with the situation.

Ensuring that children and young people are aware of and have the skills to set up protective measures not only on their device but on the sites they visit (privacy settings) and that the tools necessary for accessing the internet are financially accessible to all children and young people decreases their likelihood of accepting a gift from or accessing unfamiliar websites suggested by potential child sex abusers, therefore reducing the success rate of those offenders who use this approach when grooming children.

Keeping the child in pursuit of a particular objective

Developing quizzes with rewards and making safety lessons fun could encourage children and young people to stay in pursuit of keeping themselves safe when using the internet. If the suggestions put forward by respondent discussed in Chapters Six and Seven were implemented, such as school only websites, online scenarios or tasks and quizzes, young people would be more likely to participate in internet safety lessons. If these suggestions included rewards such as access to sites such as YouTube, certificates and extra computer time, young people could be more likely to keep in pursuit of the task and less likely to seek rewards elsewhere.

If, as suggested in the first stage of the scaffolding process, children and young people are more fully informed of the risk of dangerous adults and the behaviour used by potential child sex abusers and if internet safety lessons are made more engaging to encourage their participation, some of the tactics used by offenders may become less effective.

If report abuse buttons are made readily available and prominent, children and young people can report any threats they receive or images of child pornography that are sent to them instantly. If children and young people are also clear in their understanding that

they should never receive gifts or accept promises of gifts from people they have never met before (the same way they would not accept a sweet from a stranger in the street) this will increase the likelihood of this approach becoming less-effective for potential child sex abusers. It also needs to be made clear to children and young people that if they (or their family) are threatened in any way when they are communicating through the internet they should tell a responsible adult as soon as possible and that there will be no repercussions for their actions thereby eliminating the bullying tactics used by some potential groomers.

Marking the critical features of the task

This stage can be tied in with the previous stage and linked to respondents' suggestions regarding rewards for passing quizzes or completing scenarios correctly. It can also be achieved by acknowledging their progress. Several respondents' raised the issue of responsibility and how they were capable of looking after themselves and dealing with any situation which may arise when they were using the internet. Older children could have their responsibility acknowledged by being taken on in an advisory position or by being asked to provide internet safety lessons to younger children. Critical features could also be marked by providing some form of recognition that a child or young person has completed a stage of their internet safety learning and are ready to move on to the next (a certificate for example). This would only work, however, if age-appropriate lessons were given in schools.

In the home, critical features could be marked by parents rewarding children for their good behaviour when using the internet. Allowing them on to a website they were previously not allowed on or playing an online game they were previously prevented from playing for example.

If children and young people are being rewarded for their safe behaviour and are therefore encouraged to continue this behaviour they are less likely to be dependent on the praises and affection given to them by strangers or potential child sex abusers on the internet, which in turn will make this tactic a less effective approach and will reduce the likelihood of groomers attracting any potential victims.

Controlling the child's frustration during problem solving

If age-appropriate lessons are developed and administered on a regular basis during a class which is seen as relevant to the pupils (such as IT classes) then it is likely that any tasks which children and young people have difficulty in problem solving will be minimised. Teachers and peers could be on hand to help with the situation which would result in the young person being able to deal with the same situation should they experience it again when accessing the internet on their own. Having regular lessons could also mean that any tasks a child was unsure about or did not quite grasp the first time around could be demonstrated and explained to them again during the next lesson.

Assisting children through these difficulties could, potentially, enable them to become more empowered and confident in their abilities to deal with certain situations should they arise during their time on the internet. This could eliminate a potential child victim's reliance on the offender to take control of the communications and increase their likelihood of reporting the incidence. This, potentially, reduces the chances of a groomer obtaining or maintaining communication with a potential child victim.

Demonstrating solution to the child or explaining the solution that the child has partially completed

This final task is again linked to the education and implementation of safety measures discussed in previous stages. According to respondents' they were told that certain websites were banned at school, such as YouTube, but they were not given any explanation as to why these sites were banned. Likewise, they stated that they were told to behave in a certain manner when using the internet but no detailed explanation was given to them to inform them of what could happen to them if they did not behave in this manner. Respondents' desired more detailed information which would allow them to successfully negotiate any difficulties they may find themselves in.

As before this task can be achieved through the development of age-appropriate materials and lessons and through peer to peer teachings. This would allow children and young people to learn about internet safety at a level and progress that was suitable for their developmental stage. Making safety measures, such as report buttons, a more prominent feature on websites could also help children and young people progress and feel more confident in their internet safety knowledge.

Educating children and young people in this way could eliminate their need to gain assistance elsewhere. It could also make them more aware of the importance of recording their communications, thereby making them less likely to agree to implement any security measures suggested to them by people they have never met before. Empowering children and young people in this way could make it very difficult for potential child sex abusers to ensure that their communications are kept secret and their chances of being disclosed and detected kept low. This, in turn, could reduce the number of offenders who go on to arrange to meet with potential child victims.

Implementation of these suggestions for each stage of the scaffolding process could dramatically reduce the number of children and young people who turn to strangers, potential child sex abusers, for help and advice when using internet communication devices. If a holistic approach was taken which incorporated the use of ZPD and Scaffolding presented in this thesis (with regards to the behaviour of abusers and young people) and the application of scaffolding in sex offender treatment programs discussed previously this could, potentially, lead to a significant decrease in occurrences of child sex abuse.

This is a brief introduction to the application of the zone of proximal development and scaffolding to the education and promotion of internet safety to children and young people, which complements its application to potential groomers as set out in Chapter Two. Using the process of ZPD and scaffolding to educate children and young people could, potentially, render a number of the approaches taken by child sex abusers ineffective and unsuccessful. This is a new application of this theory which is still in the early stages and whilst it shows promise it still needs further development and critical analysis.

Overall

This study was limited in that it was an online survey which was completed individually by each respondent. It would have been beneficial to have a follow up study with focus groups to tease out some of the issues raised by the children and young people. It may also be worthwhile carrying out a longitudinal survey to see if, how, when and why opinions change with age as the findings from the present study indicated that there is still a gap in knowledge when it comes to understanding children and young people's behaviour and opinions when using the internet.

When comparing children and young people's behaviour with that of online groomers similar stages or processes could be identified that may provide a basis for improved internet safety education. Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development and Wood *et al.*'s (1976) scaffolding process was identified as helping to understand the behaviours of both victims and offender. By linking the findings of the present study to these theories it was possible to identify clear recommendations regarding internet safety teachings and awareness-raising.

The results of the present study, however, clearly indicate that more needs to be done to protect children and young people when they are using the internet. This will involve a collaborative strategy involving parents, teachers, Government, industry and young people themselves. In addition, more development is needed in legislation in relation to internet grooming. It is acknowledged that this is an on-going task and faces many complications; however, current grooming legislation only protects those who go on to arrange a meeting with the potential child sex abuser. There is no clear legislation to protect children who are groomed on the internet by offenders who gain all their pleasure and satisfaction through the online environment and do not progress to the outside world.

Further research is required to developed a greater understanding of the issue of strangers on the internet and how distinctions are made between strangers and friends they have never met before, for example, how does a person move from one category to the other. Further research is also required to investigate the apparent difference of opinions and education between children and young people in Scotland.

The contribution of children and young people to this study has proved to be a rewarding and valuable experience, which highlighted the depth and quality of

responses they were both able and willing to provide. It is a positive step toward emphasising the importance of including children in research. The data gathered was detailed and abundant which, unfortunately, could not be covered in its entirety in this thesis.

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Legislation

Children (Scotland) Act 1995

Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010

Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005

Sex Offences Act (2003)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990

UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography 2000

EU Council Framework Decision 2009 '*Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography*'

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Proposal for a: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography, repealing Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA (2010)

APPENDIX A

Copy of online survey questions

Introduction

Welcome to the Children and Young People's Internet Use Survey. Thank you for taking the time to help give me your thoughts and opinions about how you access and use the internet.

It should only take about 35 – 45 minutes to complete. The results from this survey will help let teachers and other people who work with children know how it is that children and young people want to be protected when on the internet.

The survey is on several pages and once you have answered a question and moved on to the next question you cannot go back to the question before.

When you arrive at the final 'thank you' page, you will know that you have finished the survey and all your answers have been saved.

Please click on the 'Next' button below to start the survey. Thank you.

Data Protection

No details or personal information will be asked about you and no details will be given out about you when writing up the results and completing the research.

You can change your mind and exit the survey at any time, without saying why you have changed your mind.

****Please note that some of the questions may appear out of alignment, however, when online they are all in tables and have logic function applied.**

General Questions

There are 5 sections of questions all together in this survey. This first section is just a few general question about you but do not ask you anything personal.

1. Are you?

Male Female

2. What school year are you in?

P6 P7 S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6

3. Where do you live?

Country City/Town

4. Do you have access to the Internet at home?

Yes No

Internet Access

The next section of questions are about how and where you access the Internet and who you access the Internet with (if anybody).

5. Which of the following items do you own or have in your home?

(please tick all that apply)

| | You | Parents | Sister | Brother | Other |
|------------------------|-----|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| Desktop Computer | | | | | |
| Laptop | | | | | |
| Netbook | | | | | |
| Xbox 360 | | | | | |
| Playstation 3 | | | | | |
| Wii | | | | | |
| Smartphone | | | | | |
| IPhone | | | | | |
| IPod | | | | | |
| IPad | | | | | |
| Tablet PC | | | | | |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | |

6. Which of the following items do you use to regularly access the Internet?

(Please tick all that apply)

Desktop Computer

Laptop

Netbook

Xbox 360

Playstation 3

Wii

Smartphone

IPhone

IPod

IPad

Tablet PC

Other (please specify)

7. Where do you usually access the Internet?

(Please tick all that apply)

At home in a family room (with an adult supervising you)

At home in your bedroom (with an adult supervising you)

At school

At home in a family room (on your own)

At home in your bedroom (on your own)

At the local library

At a friend/family/neighbour's house

Outside with friends

Outside on your own

Internet café

8. Who do you access the Internet with?

(Please tick all that apply)

Parents/Carers

Brothers/Sisters

Teachers

Friends

On your own

Other (please specify)

9. Which 3 things do you do the most when you are on the Internet?

1.

2.

3.

Gaming Questions

Well Done!

You have reached the 3rd section of the survey which means you are almost half way through the survey :-)

The next section of questions are about gaming BUT only games you need to be online to play, not games you can play on your devices without having to access the Internet.

If you do not play any games on the Internet please answer 'No' for the first question.

10. Do you play games on the Internet?

Yes

No

11. What devices do you use to play games on the Internet?

(please tick all that apply)

Desktop Computer

Laptop

Netbook

Xbox 360

Playstation 3

Wii

Smartphone

IPhone

IPod

IPad

Tablet PC

Other (please specify)

12. Are the games you play 'multiplayer'?

Yes No Sometimes

13. When playing games online do you play with?

(Please tick all that apply)

Friends

People you know

Familiar gaming names (but you have never met face-to-face)

People you don't know

Anyone (as long as you can play your game)

Other (please specify)

14. Whilst gaming online, could you please rate the choices in order of importance when deciding on becoming friends with someone?

(1 most important - 5 least important)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | | | | |

Quality of play

Type of game/reason for playing

Name of individual (gamer tag)

Level of communication (gaming only, chatting, both etc.)

Whether they view the game as fun or seriously

15. Do you use 'chat' when playing games online (voice or text), e.g. Xbox Live, Playstation Online?

Yes No

16. Do you give out personal information when playing games online, e.g. Xbox Live, Playstation Online?

Yes No

Safety Questions

The next section of questions are all about children and young people's protection and safety when on the Internet.

17. Do you think that children and young people need to be kept safe when using the Internet?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

18. At home is there anything in place which controls your access to the Internet?

Yes, controls are in place to check what sites I visit

Yes, my parents/carers restrict the amount of time I spend on the Internet

Yes, my parents supervise me when I access the Internet?

No, I can use the Internet when I choose, for as long as I choose and have no restrictions on what I view

Other (please specify)

19. Do you agree that parents/carers should make sure they know what children and young people are looking at when they are on the Internet?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

20. Do you agree that parents/carers should set-up their computer so that they can control children and young people's use of the Internet?

Yes

No

Please explain your answer

21. Can you describe the controls (if any) that are in place in your home for your safety when on the Internet?

22. Do you agree with them?

Yes No

23. Looking at the list below, how safe from harm do you feel from the following people when on the Internet?

Very Safe A Little Safe Don't Know A Little Unsafe Very Unsafe

Friends you know

Friends you have never met before

Children/young people you don't know

Adults you know

Adults you don't know

24. Are you aware of safety measures in place on the Internet which help protect children and young people when they are online?

Yes No

25. Do you know about any of the following safety measures that you can use when on the Internet?

Yes No

Internet Watch Foundation

CEOP

CEOP 'Click' Button

Report Abuse Buttons

Privacy Settings

Social Networking Sites Settings

ThinkUKnow

If you know of any safety measure not listed above please add it in the box below:

26. Where did you learn about the safety measures you knew from the previous two questions?

27. Do you think that the safety measures mentioned above which are in place to protect children and young people are any good?

Yes, they play a big part in making me feel safe

They are okay but I think more needs to be done

They do nothing to protect children and young people

Please add anything else you would like to say

28. Who do you think knows more about being safe on the Internet?

You Parents/carers Teachers All know the same

Why do you think this is?

29. Do you think that schools are doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the Internet?

Yes No

30. Is there anything you would like schools to do that they are not already doing to teach children and young people about being safe on the Internet?

31. Do you think that the Government is doing enough to listen to children and young people's thoughts about how they would like to be protected from dangerous adults when using the Internet?

Yes No Don't Know

32. Is there anything you would like the Government to do so that children and young people can be listened to more about how they would like to be protected from dangerous adults when using the Internet?

33. What is the one thing you think could be done to keep children safe when online?

34. What advice about Internet safety would you give to a younger child?

Questions about Personal Information

Well Done!

You have reached the last section of the survey which means you are almost done :-)

This final section of questions are about the type of information you give out when on the Internet.

35. Do you believe it is safer to give out personal information when on the Internet or keep this type of information secret? (e.g. address, phone number, name of school etc.)

Give Details Keep it Secret

Why do you think this?

36. If you were to experience something that made you feel uncomfortable on the Internet, something you thought may be harmful or dangerous, do you feel confident you would know how to deal with the situation?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

37. Would you tell your parents/carers about it?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

38. Would you tell someone else about it?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

39. Do you think that experiencing something that made you feel uncomfortable on the Internet would change the way you normally behave on the Internet in the future?

Yes No

If yes, in what way do you think your behaviour would change?

40. When on the Internet, have you ever done any of the following?

Yes No

Looked for a friend (who you know already)

Looked for a new friend

Added a new friend to your contact list who you have never met face-to-face

Pretended to be someone else

41. Do you think there is a difference between 'strangers' or 'people you have never met before' when ON THE INTERNET and 'strangers' or 'people you have never met before' when OUTSIDE IN THE REAL ENVIRONMENT?

Yes No

If yes, what do you think the difference is?

42. Why do you think children and young people are willing to talk to strangers or people they have never met face-to-face before when they are on the Internet?

43. When on the Internet, what personal information have you shared?

| | With Family or friends you have met | With online strangers | With online friends I have never met |
|---------|--|-----------------------|---|
| Face-to | | | Face |

Your full name

Your home address

Your home telephone number

Your mobile telephone number

Your email address

Details about your family (brother, sister, parents etc.)

The name of the

School you attend

The name of any clubs you attend

Your plans for the evening

Your friends/family's plans for the evening

Your plans for the weekend

Your friends/family's plans for the Weekend

If you are going to be home alone

Photos of yourself

Photos of your friends/family

44. When on the Internet IN THE FUTURE, what personal information do you plan to share?

| | With Family or friends you have met | With online strangers | With online friends I have never met |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Face-to | | | Face |

Your full name

Your home address

Your home telephone number

Your mobile telephone number

Your email address

Details about your family (brother, sister, parents etc.)

The name of the

School you attend

The name of any clubs you attend

Your plans for the evening

Your friends/family's plans for the evening

Your plans for the weekend

Your friends/family's plans for the Weekend

If you are going to be home alone

Photos of yourself

Photos of your friends/family

45. Where would you share this personal information listed in the previous question?

(please tick all that apply)

Social Networking

Private chat (msn etc,)

Gaming

Chat Rooms

Other (please specify)

46. Have you done any of the following?

(Please tick all that apply)

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Added their details to your Instant Messenger Contact List | Added their details to your Social Networking Contact List | Received Emails, Messages, Photographs | Met Face -to-Face (on your own) | Met Face -to-Face (with friends) | Met Face -to-with family) |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|

With Family or friends you have met

With online strangers

With online friends I have never met Face-to-Face

47. IN THE FUTURE, do you plan to do any of the following?

(Please tick all that apply)

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Add their details to your Instant Messenger Contact List | Add their details to your Social Networking Contact List | Receive Emails, Messages, Photographs | Meet Face -to-Face (on your own) | Meet Face -to-Face (with friends) | Meet Face -to-with family) |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|

With Family or friends you have met

With online strangers

With online friends I have never met Face-to-Face

48. When online, please rate the following choices in order of importance when deciding on becoming friends with someone?

(1 most important - 5 least important)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | | | | |

Look of Individual (profile picture)

Name

If you can access and check their profile page

If you have mutual friends

Popularity/number of friends

49. When face-to-face, please rate the following choices in order of importance when deciding on becoming friends with someone?

(1 most important - 5 least important)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | | | | |

Look of Individual (facial features/age)

Look of individual (dress wear)

You know someone who knows them

Whether you are with friends or on your own

Location of meeting (street/park/shopping centre etc.)

50. Do you have any other thoughts, comments or suggestions to do with the Internet safety that you feel have not been covered in this survey?

Thank you

Well Done!

You have now completed the survey :-D

Thank you very much for taking the time to help with this survey. Your answers have now been saved and you can now exit the survey.

APPENDIX B

Chapter Four – Detailed Percentages

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe children and young people need to be kept safe when using the internet by gender and school year:

Table 1.1: Do children and young people need to be kept safe online by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 41.5 % | 6.3 % |
| Female | 48.1 % | 4.1 % |
| Total | 89.6 % | 10.4 % |

Table 1.2: Do children and young people need to be kept safe online by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 10.3 % | 0.6 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 14.1 % | 0.6 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 14.9 % | 1 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 33 % | 5.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 6.9 % | 0.8 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 4.3 % | 1.2 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 4 % | 0.4 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 2.1 % | 0.2 % |
| Total | 89.5 % | 10.5 % |

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe they would be confident they would know what to do if they experienced something that made them feel uncomfortable or something they thought may be harmful or dangerous on the internet by gender and school year:

Table 1.3: Confident in dealing with something uncomfortable by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 33.9 % | 13.4 % |
| Female | 37.3 % | 15.4 % |
| Total | 71.2 % | 28.8 % |

Table 1.4: Confident in dealing with something uncomfortable by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 6 % | 4.4 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 9.9 % | 5.2 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 11 % | 4.7 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 28.5 % | 9.8 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 6.5 % | 1.2 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 4.6 % | 1.4 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 3.4 % | 0.9 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.4 % | 1 % |
| Total | 71.3 % | 28.7 % |

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe that experiencing something that made them feel uncomfortable when using the internet would change their behaviour online in the future by gender and school year:

Table 1.5: Experiencing something uncomfortable changing behaviour by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 23.2 % | 23.1 % |
| Female | 38.3 % | 15.4 % |
| Total | 61.5 % | 38.5 % |

Table 1.6: Experiencing something uncomfortable changing behaviour by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 6 % | 4.2 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 10.5 % | 4.7 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 9.7 % | 5.6 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 24.6 % | 14 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 4.6 % | 3.4 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 3.1 % | 3 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 1.9 % | 2.3 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.2 % | 1.3 % |
| Total | 61.6 % | 38.4 % |

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe it is safer to give out personal information when using the internet or keep personal information secret by gender and school year:

Table 1.7: Disclosing personal information on the internet by gender

| | Give Details | Keep it Secret |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 3.4 % | 43.8 % |
| Female | 1.6 % | 51.1 % |
| Total | 5 % | 95 % |

Table 1.8: Disclosing personal information on the internet by age

| | Give Details | Keep it Secret |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 0.4 % | 10.4 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 0.1 % | 14.5 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 0.4 % | 15.7 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 2.3 % | 36.2 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 0.8 % | 6.9 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.4 % | 5.4 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 0.5 % | 3.7 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0.3 % | 2.1 % |
| Total | 5.1 % | 94.9 % |

Respondents' views on what personal information they claimed to have shared with strangers when using the internet by gender and school year:

Table 1.9: Personal information shared online by age

| | P6 (10) | P7 (11) | S1 (12) | S2 (13) | S3 (14) | S4 (15) | S5 (16) | S6 (17) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Your full name | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.4 % | 2.3 % | 1 % | 1.1 % | 0.9 % | 0.6 % |
| Your home address | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.1 % |
| Your home telephone number | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.5 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Your mobile telephone number | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.1 % | 0 % |
| Your email address | 0 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 2.2 % | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 1.1 % | 0.5 % |
| Details of your friends and family | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.6 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.4 % | 0.3 % |
| The name of the school you attend | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1.8 % | 0.6 % | 0.4 % | 0.4 % | 0.5 % |
| The name of any clubs you attend | 0.3 % | 0.4 % | 0.1 % | 1.5 % | 0.5 % | 0.2 % | 0.2 % | 0.1 % |
| Your plans for the evening | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 1.8 % | 0.3 % | 1.1 % | 1.1 % | 0.8 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the evening | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1 % | 0.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.8 % | 0.1 % |
| Your plans for the weekend | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 1.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 1 % | 0.9 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the weekend | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| If you are going to be home alone | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.6 % | 0 % | 0.4 % | 0.3 % | 0.1 % |
| Photos of yourself | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 1.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.8 % | 1.3 % | 0.8 % |
| Photos of your friends or family | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0.3 % | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 0.8 % |

Respondents' views on what personal information they state that they plan to share with strangers when using the internet in the future by gender and school year:

Table 2.0: Personal information shared online in the future by gender

| | Male | Female |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| Your full name | 2 % | 2.5 % |
| Your home address | 0.6 % | 0 % |
| Your home telephone number | 0.8 % | 0 % |
| Your mobile telephone number | 0.9 % | 0.1 % |
| Your email address | 1.4 % | 1.3 % |
| Details of your friends and family | 1 % | 0.5 % |
| The name of the school you attend | 1.8 % | 1.4 % |
| The name of any clubs you attend | 2 % | 0.8 % |
| Your plans for the evening | 1.3 % | 2 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the evening | 1 % | 0.9 % |
| Your plans for the weekend | 1 % | 2 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the weekend | 1 % | 0.9 % |
| If you are going to be home alone | 0.9 % | 0.8 % |
| Photos of yourself | 1.5 % | 1.9 % |
| Photos of your friends or family | 1 % | 1 % |

Table 2.1: Personal information shared online in the future by age

| | P6 (10) | P7 (11) | S1 (12) | S2 (13) | S3 (14) | S4 (15) | S5 (16) | S6 (17) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Your full name | 0 % | 0.3 % | 0.3 % | 1.8 % | 0.5 % | 1 % | 0.6 % | 0.1 % |
| Your home address | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.6 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Your home telephone number | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Your mobile telephone number | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.9 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0 % |
| Your email address | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1.5 % | 0 % | 0.4 % | 0.6 % | 0.1 % |
| Details of your friends and family | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.9 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.4 % | 0.1 % |
| The name of the school you attend | 0.3 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 1.5 % | 0.4 % | 0.4 % | 0.4 % | 0.1 % |
| The name of any clubs you attend | 0.4 % | 0.1 % | 0 % | 1.7 % | 0.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % |
| Your plans for the evening | 0.3 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.8 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the evening | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.9 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| Your plans for the weekend | 0.1 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1 % | 0.3 % | 0.8 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| Your friends or family's plans for the weekend | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.9 % | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| If you are going to be home alone | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0 % | 0.5 % | 0.3 % | 0.1 % |
| Photos of yourself | 0 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 1.3 % | 0.3 % | 0.8 % | 0.8 % | 0.1 % |
| Photos of your friends or family | 0 % | 0 % | 0 % | 1 % | 0 % | 0.3 % | 0.6 % | 0.1 % |

Respondents' views where they would share the personal information highlighted previously by gender and school year:

Table 2.2: Where personal information is shared by gender

| | Social Networking | Private Chat Rooms | Gaming | Public Chat Rooms |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Male | 18.7 % | 19.7 % | 18.7 % | 8.6 % |
| Female | 22.8 % | 31.3 % | 3 % | 5.1 % |
| Total | 41.5 % | 51 % | 21.8 % | 13.7 % |

Table 2.3: Where personal information is shared by age

| | Social Networking | Private Chat Rooms | Gaming | Public Chat Rooms |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 1.4 % | 4.1 % | 1.9 % | 1.8 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 3.7 % | 9.4 % | 4.1 % | 2.8 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 3.9 % | 7.9 % | 2.3 % | 2.3 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 18.3 % | 18.9 % | 9.5 % | 4.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 4.8 % | 4.3 % | 2.4 % | 1.1 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 4.2 % | 3 % | 0.6 % | 0.6 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 3.4 % | 2.4 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.8 % | 1 % | 0.5 % | 0.1 % |
| Total | 41. % | 51 % | 21.9 % | 13.7 % |

Respondents' views activities they have participated in with strangers when on the internet by gender and school year:

Table 2.4: Activities participated in online by gender

| | Male | Female |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Added their details to your instant messenger account | 15.6 % | 23.5 % |
| Added their details to your social networking account | 20 % | 31.6 % |
| Received emails, messages, photographs | 2.4 % | 3.4 % |
| Met face-to-face (on your own) | 0.6 % | 1.3 % |
| Met face-to-face (with friends) | 5.9 % | 6.7 % |
| Met face-to face (with family) | 2.8 % | 6.6 % |

Table 2.5: Activities participated in online by age

| | P6 (10) | P7 (11) | S1 (12) | S2 (13) | S3 (14) | S4 (15) | S5 (16) | S6 (17) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Added their details to your instant messenger account | 2 % | 4.6 % | 4.7 % | 16.5 % | 3.4 % | 2.9 % | 3.4 % | 1.4 % |
| Added their details to your social networking account | 3.2 % | 7.2 % | 6.7 % | 21.2 % | 4.4 % | 3.7 % | 3.5 % | 1.6 % |
| Received emails, messages, photographs | 0 % | 0.8 % | 0.3 % | 1.4 % | 0.9 % | 1 % | 1.3 % | 0.3 % |
| Met face-to-face (on your own) | 0.3 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.4 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % |
| Met face-to-face (with friends) | 0.3 % | 1.1 % | 0.6 % | 3.5 % | 2 % | 1.5 % | 2.8 % | 0.6 % |
| Met face-to face (with family) | 0.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.4 % | 3.3 % | 2.2 % | 1.1 % | 1.5 % | 0.4 % |

Respondents' views activities they plan to participate in with strangers when on the internet in the future by gender and school year:

Table 2.6: Activities to be participated in online in the future by gender

| | Male | Female |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Added their details to your instant messenger account | 15.3 % | 24.4 % |
| Added their details to your social networking account | 18 % | 29 % |
| Received emails, messages, photographs | 1.9 % | 2.7 % |
| Met face-to-face (on your own) | 0.9 % | 1.1 % |
| Met face-to-face (with friends) | 5.2 % | 5.4 % |
| Met face-to face (with family) | 3.2 % | 7.2 % |

Table 2.7: Activities to be participated in online in the future by age

| | P6 (10) | P7 (11) | S1 (12) | S2 (13) | S3 (14) | S4 (15) | S5 (16) | S6 (17) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Added their details to your instant messenger account | 2.5 % | 4.8 % | 5.2 % | 16.5 % | 3.3 % | 2.8 % | 3 % | 1.4 % |
| Added their details to your social networking account | 2.9 % | 6.8 % | 5.8 % | 18.8 % | 4.2 % | 3.5 % | 3.3 % | 1.5 % |
| Received emails, messages, photographs | 0 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 0.6 % | 1 % | 0.9 % | 0.3 % |
| Met face-to-face (on your own) | 0.1 % | 0.3 % | 0.3 % | 0.5 % | 0.3 % | 0.4 % | 0.3 % | 0 % |
| Met face-to-face (with friends) | 0.1 % | 1.1 % | 0.8 % | 3 % | 1.6 % | 1.3 % | 2 % | 0.6 % |
| Met face-to face (with family) | 0.1 % | 0.6 % | 0.5 % | 3.9 % | 1.8 % | 1.1 % | 1.6 % | 0.5 % |

APPENDIX C

Chapter Five – Detailed Percentages

Respondents' views on how safe from harm they feel from friends they have never met before by gender and age:

Table 2.8: How safe they feel from online friends never met before by gender

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 6.8 % | 12 % | 8.7% | 7.3 % |
| Female | 4.6 % | 13.9 % | 14 % | 9.1 % |
| Total | 11.4 % | 25.9% | 22.8 % | 16.4 % |

Table 2.9: How safe they feel from online friends never met before by age

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 0.6 % | 1.6 % | 3 % | 3.8 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 0.6 % | 2.7 % | 4.4 % | 3.9 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 1.8 % | 3.4 % | 3.3 % | 3.5 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 4.9 % | 10.4 % | 9.1 % | 4.3 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 1.1 % | 3.5 % | 1.4 % | 0.4 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 1.3 % | 2 % | 0.8 % | 0.3 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 0.9 % | 1.4 % | 0.5 % | 0.1 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 0.1 % | 0.1 % |
| Total | 11.5 % | 25.9 % | 22.7 % | 16.5 % |

Respondents' views on how safe from harm they feel from other children and young people whilst on the internet by gender and age:

Table 3.0: How safe they feel from other children and young people online by gender

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 7.4 % | 9.1 % | 10.8 % | 7.4 % |
| Female | 4.2 % | 8.8 % | 17.2 % | 10.8 % |
| Total | 11.6 % | 17.9 % | 28 % | 18.2 % |

Table 3.1: How safe they feel from other children and young people online by age

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 1 % | 1.1 % | 3.2 % | 3.8 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 0.5 % | 2.7 % | 5.3 % | 3.3 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 1.7 % | 1.7 % | 5.1 % | 3.9 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 4.7 % | 7.9 % | 9.5 % | 6.1 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 1.5 % | 1.4 % | 2.2 % | 0.5 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.9 % | 1.7 % | 1.4 % | 0.1 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 1 % | 0.9 % | 1 % | 0.3 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0.3 % | 0.5 % | 0.1 % | 0.3 % |
| Total | 11.6 % | 17.8 % | 27.9 % | 18.3 % |

Respondents' views on how safe from harm they feel from adults they do not know when on the internet by gender and age:

Table 3.2: How safe they feel from online adults they do not know by gender

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Male | 3.5 % | 4.1 % | 6 % | 27.7 % |
| Female | 1.4 % | 1.8 % | 6.5 % | 37.9 % |
| Total | 4.9 % | 5.9 % | 12.5 % | 65.6 % |

Table 3.3: How safe they feel from online adults they do not know by age

| | Very Safe | A Little Safe | A Little Unsafe | Very Unsafe |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 0.4 % | 0.4 % | 0.6 % | 8.5 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 0.1 % | 0.4 % | 1.3 % | 11.8 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 0.8 % | 0.9 % | 1.6 % | 10.9 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 2 % | 2.1 % | 5.8 % | 24.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 0.9 % | 0.8 % | 0.8 % | 4.9 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.4 % | 0.9 % | 0.9 % | 2.4 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 0.5 % | 0.3 % | 1 % | 1.5 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0 % | 0.3 % | 0.6 % | 0.6 % |
| Total | 5 % | 5.9 % | 12.6 % | 65.5 % |

APPENDIX D

Chapter Six – Detailed Percentages

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe that schools are doing enough to teach children and young people about being safe on the internet by gender and school year:

Table 3.4: Are schools doing enough by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 36.2 % | 11.1 % |
| Female | 41.5 % | 11.2 % |
| Total | 77.8 % | 22.2 % |

Table 3.5: Are schools doing enough by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 8.6 % | 2.2 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 13.3 % | 1.6 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 14.3 % | 1.7 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 29.6 % | 9 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 5.8 % | 1.7 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 3 % | 2.7 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 2.5 % | 1.7 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0.9 % | 1.5 % |
| Total | 77.9 % | 22.1 % |

APPENDIX E

Chapter Seven – Detailed Percentages

Respondents' views on whether or not they claim to be aware of safety measures in place on the internet by gender and school year:

Table 4.3: Aware of safety measures by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 38.8 % | 9.4 % |
| Female | 42.4 % | 9.3 % |
| Total | 81.3 % | 18.7 % |

Table 4.4: Aware of safety measures by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 8.1 % | 2.6 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 12.9 % | 2 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 12.9 % | 2.6 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 32.4 % | 6.2 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 6.2 % | 1.6 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 4.1 % | 1.6 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 3.2 % | 1.1 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.5 % | 0.9 % |
| Total | 81.4 % | 18.6 % |

Respondents' views on whether or not they claim to know about safety measure currently in place that can be accessed when using the internet by gender and school year:

Table 4.5: Awareness of Internet Watch Foundation by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 14 % | 32.7 % |
| Female | 10.3 % | 43 % |
| Total | 24.3 % | 75.7 % |

Table 4.6: Awareness of Internet Watch Foundation by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 2.1 % | 7.1 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 5.1 % | 10.5 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 3.4 % | 12.5 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 10.3 % | 29.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 1.8 % | 5.9 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 1.3 % | 3.9 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 0.3 % | 4.1 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0 % | 1.8 % |
| Total | 24.5 % | 75.5 % |

Table 4.7: Awareness of CEOP by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 17.9 % | 28.3 % |
| Female | 16.6 % | 37.2 % |
| Total | 34.5 % | 65.5 % |

Table 4.8: Awareness of CEOP by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 3 % | 6.4 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 6.8 % | 7.9 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 2 % | 13 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 19.3 % | 22.4 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 1.8 % | 5.9 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.7 % | 4.6 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 1.2 % | 3.3 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0 % | 1.8 % |
| Total | 34.6 % | 65.4 % |

Table 4.9: Awareness of CEOP ‘Click’ Button by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 17.3 % | 28.9 % |
| Female | 16.4 % | 37.4 % |
| Total | 33.7 % | 66.3 % |

Table 5.0: Awareness of CEOP ‘Click’ Button by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 2.5 % | 7.1 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 6.6 % | 8.2 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 1.8 % | 13.1 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 19 % | 22.5 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 1.8 % | 5.9 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.7 % | 4.4 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 1.3 % | 3.2 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0 % | 1.8 % |
| Total | 33.8 % | 66.2 % |

Table 5.1: Awareness of Report Abuse Buttons by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 35 % | 11.4 % |
| Female | 39.7 % | 13.8 % |
| Total | 74.8 % | 25.2 % |

Table 5.2: Awareness of Report Abuse Buttons by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 4.7 % | 4.6 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 10.6 % | 4.7 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 8.8 % | 5.7 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 33.3 % | 7.8 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 6.9 % | 1.1 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 5.1 % | 0.3 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 3.9 % | 0.5 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.6 % | 0.3 % |
| Total | 74.9 % | 25.1 % |

Table 5.3: Awareness of Privacy Settings by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 38.8 % | 7.6 % |
| Female | 45.8 % | 7.6 % |
| Total | 84.6 % | 15.1 % |

Table 5.4: Awareness of Privacy Settings by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 6 % | 3.2 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 12.2 % | 2.3 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 11.5 % | 3.9 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 36.3 % | 4.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 7.5 % | 0.6 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 5.3 % | 0 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 4.1 % | 0.3 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.9 % | 0 % |
| Total | 84.8 % | 15.1 % |

Table 5.5: Awareness of Social Networking Sites Settings by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 29.4 % | 16.4 % |
| Female | 33.7 % | 20.5 % |
| Total | 63.1 % | 36.9 % |

Table 5.6: Awareness of Social Networking Sites Settings by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 2.9 % | 6.2 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 10.6 % | 4.4 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 7.9 % | 7.7 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 25.2 % | 15.6 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 6.4 % | 1.2 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 5.2 % | 0.3 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 3.5 % | 1 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1.5 % | 0.3 % |
| Total | 63.2 % | 36.8 % |

Table 5.7: Awareness of ThinkUKnow by gender

| | Yes | No |
|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Male | 18.4 % | 26.8 % |
| Female | 21.4 % | 33.4 % |
| Total | 39.8 % | 60.2 % |

Table 5.8: Awareness of ThinkUKnow by age

| | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|
| P6 (10yrs) | 4.7 % | 4.5 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 8.9 % | 5.7 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 4.2 % | 11.1 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 17.8 % | 23.5 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 2.8 % | 5.2 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 0.8 % | 4.5 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 0.7 % | 3.9 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 0 % | 1.8 % |
| Total | 39.9 % | 60.1 % |

Respondents' views on whether or not they believe that the safety measures mentioned previously which are in place to protect children and young people when online are any good by gender and school year:

Table 5.9: Are safety measures any good by gender

| | Yes, they play a big part in making me feel safe | They are okay but I think more needs to be done | They do nothing to protect children and young people |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| Male | 26.7 % | 16.2 % | 3.7 % |
| Female | 35.1 % | 16.5 % | 1.9 % |
| Total | 61.7 % | 32.7 % | 5.6 % |

Table 6.0: Are safety measures any good by age

| | Yes, they play a big part in making me feel safe | They are okay but I think more needs to be done | They do nothing to protect children and young people |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| P6 (10yrs) | 8.3 % | 1.4 % | 0 % |
| P7 (11yrs) | 11.4 % | 4 % | 0.6 % |
| S1 (12yrs) | 11.3 % | 4.6 % | 0.5 % |
| S2 (13yrs) | 22.5 % | 14 % | 2.7 % |
| S3 (14yrs) | 4 % | 2.7 % | 0.6 % |
| S4 (15yrs) | 1.7 % | 3 % | 0.5 % |
| S5 (16yrs) | 1.7 % | 2.1 % | 0.5 % |
| S6 (17yrs) | 1 % | 0.8 % | 0.2 % |
| Total | 61.9 % | 32.5 % | 5.6 % |