

Children in Switzerland are using mobile phones to go online

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In no other country in Europe do more children surf the Web using their mobile phones than in Switzerland. As a study by the University of Zurich shows, children in Switzerland are adept at handling social media—they don't surf the Net extensively and only four percent have set their social network profile to "public".

On average, [children](#) in [Switzerland](#) are 9 years old when they use the internet for the first time. They spend on average 64 minutes per day online, which is substantially less than the European average (88 minutes). These are the results of a new study carried out by the Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung (Institute of [Mass Communication](#) and Media Research) at the University of Zurich. The survey was conducted in the German-speaking and western part of Switzerland with 1,000 children and young people as well as one of their [parents](#) in each case.

Internet mainly used at home

97 per cent of Swiss children between the ages of 9 and 16 go online at home (EU average: 87 per cent). A noticeably large percentage of children have access to the internet via a [handheld device](#) (49 per cent). This is considerably less common across the rest of [Europe](#) (12 per cent on average). The percentage using their mobile phones to access the internet is also significantly higher (43 per cent) than in the rest of Europe (31 per cent on average), although this figure is surpassed by

[Greece](#) (66 per cent). According to the study, children in Switzerland do not surf the Net extensively. However, 30 per cent state that they have spent time online instead of with family and friends or instead of doing their [homework](#).

In Switzerland, children mostly use the internet to watch videos (85 per cent), to do something for school (78 per cent), to use e-mail (65 per cent) or to read or watch the news (61 per cent). Only 31 per cent of children in Switzerland use [instant messaging](#), which is much less than their European counterparts (62 per cent). Nearly every-second Swiss child between the ages of 9 and 16 has his or her own social network profile. The European average is substantially higher (59 per cent). Looking just at the group of 15 to 16-year olds, 85 per cent have their own social network profile. One major difference from the European average is that only 4 per cent of children in Switzerland have set their profile to "public", meaning that everyone can see it. This figure is 26 per cent on average for the rest of Europe.

The older the child, the better the skills

The children's skills on the internet improve as they get older. Younger children in particular are still lacking in these skills. 73 per cent of the 11 to 12-year olds surveyed were not able to block spam mails or unsolicited advertising, 67 per cent did not know how to change their privacy settings on their social network page and 63 per cent were unable to stop receiving unwanted messages from other users.

35 per cent of the Swiss children surveyed had seen sexual images in the past year, which is substantially higher than the European average (23 per cent). 20 per cent had seen these images online (EU average: 14 per cent). However, 67 per cent of those surveyed said that they did not feel bothered or upset by the images. The parents often were not aware that their child had already seen such images. 8 per cent of the children had

met someone in real life who they previously only knew online (EU average: 9 per cent).

Support from parents and teachers

71 per cent of the Swiss children surveyed discuss their internet use with their parents (EU average: 70 per cent). If the parents give their children safety instructions, they explain to them why websites are good or bad (89 per cent), help their children to search for information (85 per cent) and tell them how to behave toward other people online (76 per cent). The children also get support in school for dealing with the internet: 79 per cent stated that their teachers had already helped them at least once and only 13 per cent had not received any help from teachers to date.

More information: [www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/resea ...
KidsOnline/Home.aspx](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/KidsOnline/Home.aspx)

Provided by University of Zurich

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