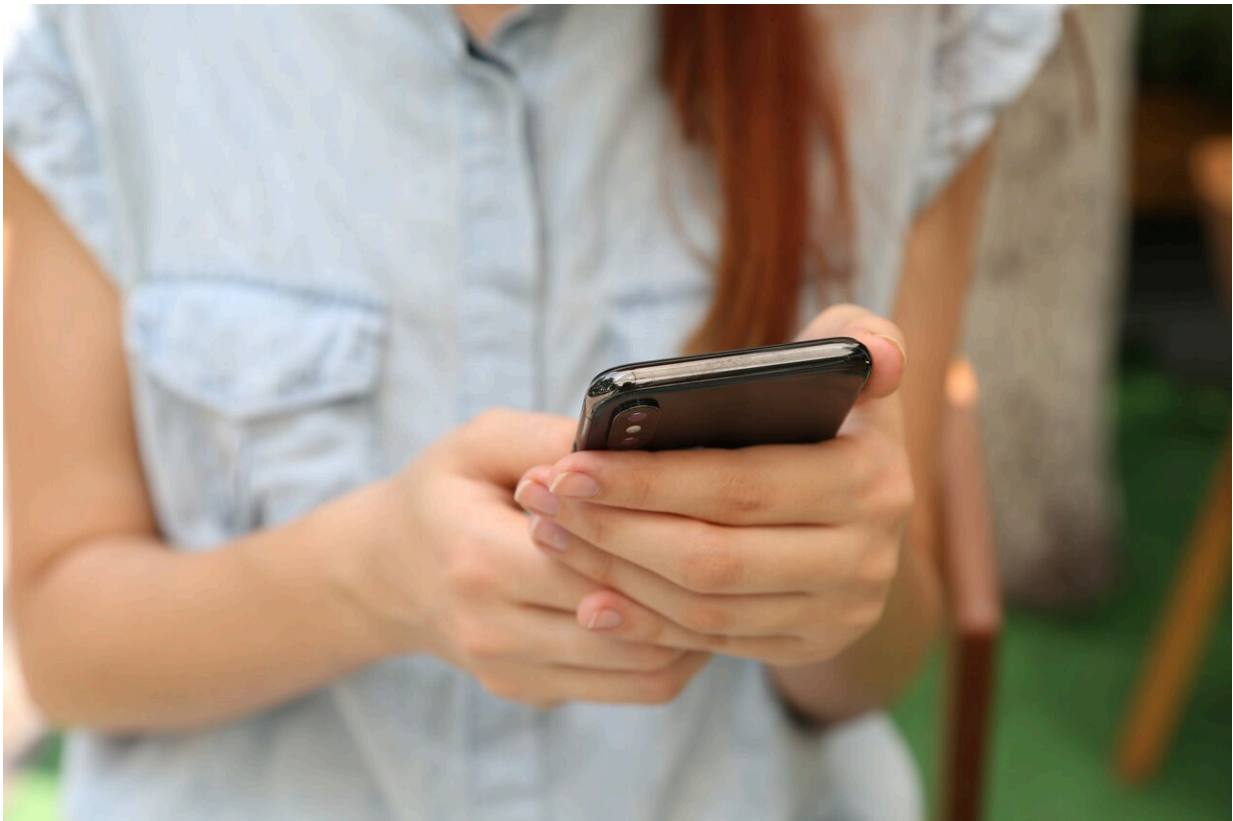


New report gives young people a voice in online safety education

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Researchers from Western Sydney University's Young and Resilient Research Center have released a new report providing critical insight into youths' aspirations for online safety education.

Published on international Safer Internet Day, the [report](#), delivered in partnership with PROJECT ROCKIT, highlights the voices of [young people](#) who have been largely absent in conversations about what and how to educate young people about online [safety](#).

The researchers surveyed 104 young people aged 13–17 from across the nation, and held online workshops led by youth facilitators with 31 young people aged 12–17 from four states and territories, as part of the study.

Professor Amanda Third, lead researcher and Co-director of the Young and Resilient Research Center, said the report lays out an innovative framework of online safety [education](#) designed by and for young people.

"Young people are rarely consulted in the development of programs or initiatives that aim to keep them safe online, and so our aim in conducting this study was to co-design a youth-centered model that centers young people's key concerns, and speaks to their needs and preferences," said Professor Third.

"The findings of the report emphasize that there is a need to shift away from dominant risk-based narratives about online safety, and embed a greater focus on social and emotional capabilities that are relevant across both online and offline settings into online safety education."

The report found while existing education has been somewhat successful in raising young people's awareness about online harms, young Australians report gaps in their online safety skills and knowledge, including when it comes to managing difficult experiences online and supporting others through negative experiences.

The findings of the study indicate that young people highly value a youth-centered, inclusive, interactive, and open and [collaborative approach](#) to

online safety education.

Linda Marsden, Ph.D. candidate at the Young and Resilient Research Center, said the report advocates for the involvement of young people in the development of online safety educational resources designed for them.

"Importantly, this framework is a starting point and calls for more work to be done to bring together young people, adults and experts to design online safety education. It also calls for a shift away from dominant risk and fear-based narratives about online safety, and highlights a need to embed socioemotional intelligences and integrated online/offline approaches into online safety education," said Linda.

The report forms part of the Real Life project which moves beyond the "how" of online safety, and into the "why" of digital ethics to help young people develop the skills and knowledge to contribute to a more respectful, safe and inclusive online community.

More information: In Real Life: Digital ethics and participation, reimagined by and for young people: www.westernsydney.edu.au/young...rojects/in_real_life

Provided by Western Sydney University

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