

The second year of the ySKILLS research saw the completion of the first wave of the three-wave study in schools among 12- to 17-year-olds. In the meantime, the performance tests have also been prepared, precisely so that the perception of digital skills and knowledge can be tested against actual digital skills levels.

In ySKILLS we are also particularly interested in learning more about gender and age in relation to skills acquisition to embrace online opportunities and to cope with online risks. In-depth ySKILLS studies on three groups of at-risk (vulnerable or disadvantaged) children (i.e., from low socio-economic homes, refugees, experiencing mental issues) are being carried out, focusing on age, gender, vulnerability, and resilience. Furthermore, one in-depth study focuses on youth confronted with an emerging issue, i.e., information disorders.

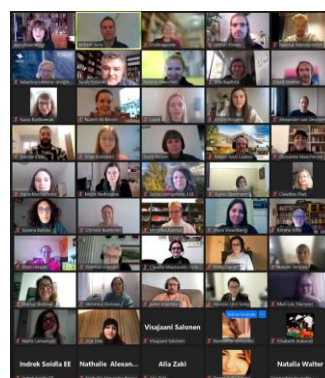
Important to know is whether these differences are just part of life's rich trajectory or whether they can be considered inequalities that require policy interventions. Our initial findings show that the normative views of digital skills as an individual achievement and notions of opportunities and risks do not fit all youth, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The ySKILLS team

OUR CHALLENGES

Different waves of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ySKILLS team and fieldwork in 2021.

The ySKILLS survey was administered in different ways (in the classroom, online, hybrid format). Some parents were reluctant to sign the informed consent forms. However, more than 6,200 pupils in six countries participated in the first wave.



ySKILLS team meeting on December 10th, 2021

ySKILLS NEWSLETTER

March 2022
Newsletter n.º 2

YSKILLS SURVEY - 1ST WAVE

The first wave of the survey was conducted in Spring 2021. Adolescents self-reported on their online access, activities, and digital skills. They also answered questions about digital knowledge, risks, and parental mediation.

Who participated?

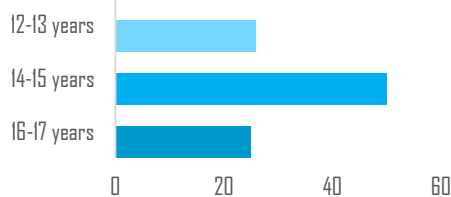
6,221 adolescents

Gender



3 out of 10 experienced **access problems** (internet, other devices) at home (where 99% access internet).

Age



Participant countries:
Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Portugal.

Estimated average time online (in hours) on a school day



4 hours

Results show...

Self-reported perceptions of digital skills and awareness of the online world are relatively similar, despite differences in digital access.

Most adolescents report high skills in practices related to communication and interaction, their main online daily activity.

Age is a key predictor of digital activities, skills, and knowledge.

Next activities

The **second wave** of the survey will take place between March and May 2022. It will include **performance tests** to compare perceived and actual digital skills.

The first **scientific articles** based on these school surveys are in preparation.

Main results on online access, activities, skills, and knowledge are available [here](#).

Estonian, Finnish, Italian, Polish, and Portuguese fact sheets with basic data in both national language and English are available [here](#).



The **webinar** "Longitudinal data collection in schools during the pandemic" reflects the challenges faced in data collection. Read a summary [here](#).

"Longitudinal research is highly useful as it generates information about the current status as well as changes over time. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption in schools, the first ySKILLS longitudinal data collection wave was a success."

Natalia Wächter
Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich

YSKILLS IN-DEPTH STUDIES

These studies intend to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of digital skills in improving or undermining at-risk (vulnerable or disadvantaged) children's wellbeing, by fostering their coping and online resilience.

Non-formal learning contexts

Participant countries: Belgium, Denmark, and Italy.

To critically examine how digital skills are developed in non-formal learning contexts (e.g., in public libraries) with children and youth from different social-economic status.

Recognizing mis- and disinformation

Participant countries: Belgium, Czech Republic, and Finland.

To investigate youth's credibility evaluation strategies about real and fake messages related to cyberhate.

Adolescents with mental problems

Participant countries: Norway and United Kingdom.

To understand the consequences of gaining digital skills among adolescents that have experienced mental health difficulties and digital risks (excessive use, self-harm, cyberbullying...).

Young refugees

Participant countries: Belgium, Greece, and United Kingdom.

To investigate how refugee adolescents use communication technologies in different moments: before they migrate, during their journey to Europe; at their arrival cities and where they settle.

Results will be released in June 2022.

2ND POLICY BRIEF

We should not fall in the trap of the "reference child" as online opportunities and risks do not fit all youth, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

A review on ySKILLS policy recommendations



The diversity of groups should be addressed since age, gender, migration, social and economic background influence their relationship with technology.



Although schools have a key role in empowering teenagers' digital skills, the responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders.



Digital inequalities (access, skills, and outcomes) should be considered in policy solutions.



As cultural and national contexts vary, policies should be addressed at a national level in addition to a European level.

Read [here](#) the 2nd policy brief for more information.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DISSEMINATION

National media coverage of the 1st wave

Ragazzi italiani 'bocciati' in competenze digitali. [Fortune](#) Italia

Jovens continuam a ter dificuldades de acesso à internet e computadores em casa
[Observador Online](#)

[Interview](#) on SkyTG24 with participation of [Giovanna Mascheroni](#)

Academic publications

Mascheroni G, Cino D, Mikuška J, Smahel D. Explaining inequalities in vulnerable children's digital skills: The effect of individual and social discrimination. *New Media & Society*. 2022;24(2):437-457. Read [here](#).

Pedaste, M., Kalmus, V., & Vainonen, K. (2021). Digipädevuse dimensioonid ja nende hindamine põhikoolis. Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri. *Estonian Journal of Education*, 9(2), 212-243. Read [here](#).



Webinars and talks:

[Seminario internacional online](#), 28th February, EU Kids Online, SIC-Spain 2.0 Project. Talk to Spanish teachers by [Cristina Ponte](#) on the role of digital skills on children's education and wellbeing.

[Apestaartjaren conference](#), 19th May, Mediawijs, ySKILLS panel with talk from [Leen d'Haenens](#) about examining children's and adolescents' digital skills.

MORE RESULTS AND NEWS

Recent posts of ySKILLS blogs

- 1st survey – results and data collection;
 - All digital skills are not all created equal;
 - Who are the children that self-report online aggression;
 - Ethical issues in longitudinal research with children, and more.
- All posts [here](#).

Publications

National factsheets on the 1st survey, policy briefs, and ySKILLS reports are available [here](#).

Webinars



Videos



Keep in touch!



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