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Facts and Figures
The current population 48,466,928 people out of which 54pc are children.
"Out of every two Kenyans, one is a child below 18 years of age.
39,664,377 Internet users by March, 2017,
5,500,000 Facebook users on June/2016
Mobile data subscriptions stands at 26.7 million.
It is, therefore, critical that the needs of this large section of our population are addressed holistically

Source: Communication Authority of Kenya

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ICT – Information& Communication Technology

KIHBS – Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
Executive Summary

In Kenya, recent developments reveal that the proliferation and accessibility of the internet is a major milestone in the communication arena.

While the Internet and Social Media Networks is a useful resource for the development of children, it has also exposed them to various forms of abuse including social media addiction, human trafficking, abductions, recruitment to criminal gangs, radicalization, pornography and cyber-bullying, to mention a few. Through social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, many children are posting personal information like home and school addresses, e-mail addresses and mobile numbers online, making it easier for sex predators and traffickers to track them.

Unfortunately, although the young Kenyan netizens may be more digitally savvy than their parents or teachers, their immaturity and inexperience in life can quickly get them into trouble.

Another disturbing revelation is that, although most parents, teachers and guardians are aware their kids are online, they do not keep tabs on their online activities and who they are communicating with.

The problem is more chronic in the informal settlements in major towns in Kenya where you will find unaccompanied children, as young as five and six, in cyber cafes, whiling away time playing computer games, watching video and communicating online with people they hardly know. Here too, children download adult content for their consumption under the cyber attendant’s nose.

In this report we present key findings from a representative survey of children aged 0-21 who were rescued from the streets and now attend school in three rescue centres run by Koinonia Community. The children have been reintegrated into their families too. The sample also includes students from a secondary school.

Key Findings:

Children’s use of the internet is dependent on age. While younger children prefer to play games and watch cartoons, older ones watch movies, video clips and to a lesser extent, sexual material. Exposure to communication technology gadgets which include mobile phones, laptops and computer has made it easy for children to interact with their friends and even with people whose background and intents they do not know much about.

Schools and institutions have offered infrastructure like computer labs where the children are guided by their teachers on how to access and use internet for posterity.

It is disturbing to note that a lot of time has been devoted by the children to watching movies/videos, chatting with friends using Whatsapp, Facebook etc. Some spend over four hours daily on the internet, instead of devoting this time to their academic and social wellbeing. It is also revealed that the children access pornographic material using their gadgets.

About our Research

This research investigates how children use the internet.

The research starts from the following assumptions:

1. Children who are underage have access to inappropriate content.
2. A lot of time goes into internet related activities which include chatting and music/movie watching online.
3. There exist opportunities to safeguard online child protection through trainings and workshops for both the children and their caregivers.
Faced with these assumptions, this research ‘Safe Online, Safe Onland’ was commissioned to contribute to individual initiatives and institutional interventions to promote and encourage safe and responsible use of the internet and social media among our children and young people.

Though the recently concluded Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey 2015/16 has an ICT module, it does not capture the issue of online access by children below 18 years old. However, serious concerns have been raised by the print and broadcast media on the increase of online risks due to exposure of children to online bullying and access to harmful contents.

**Survey Methodology**

**Interviewing technique:**

Statistically, many methods of data collection are at the disposal of the researcher to select one that effectively gives results which reduce the non-sampling error in the results/findings. If a one-to-one interviewing technique was applied there is fear that the respondents may not be open to the interviewer due to the nature of information sought.

A self-administered questionnaire was, therefore, preferred as the best methodology of collecting the data.

A brief introduction to the survey objective and a detailed exposition of the structure of the questionnaire was given to all the participants. Each was then issued with a copy of the questionnaire and encouraged to ask questions to clarify what was not well understood. Then they were allowed time to fill in the answers on the worksheet.

**Sample size:**

From the target population of 300, a sample of 93 was arrived; close to one third of the total. The gender representation was also taken into account to reduce gender bias in the sample.

**Summary of Key Findings**

- The results showed that 66% were using the internet; over 80% of the children in the teenage had access to internet compared to 20.6% of these below 13 years.
- The survey confirmed that 23% of children under 18 years had an internet account.
- 39.4% were using the internet between 30 minutes to 2 hours per day; 13.8% between 2 to 4 hours and 14.9% were connecting for over 4 hours daily.
- Results revealed that 33% accessed internet through the normal phones, 18% from computers and 11.7% on laptops.
- On where they accessed internet from, 33% indicated it was from their phones, 28.7% from school computer labs, 7.4% from cybercafes, 4.3% from mother’s phone and 3.2% from father’s phone.
- Contents that were downloaded: Videos (29.8%), music (21.3%) and games (20.2%) accounting for a combined 70%.
- Music formed the highest proportion of the watched videos accounting for 44.7%, followed by cartoons with 29.8% and games coming third at 11.7%
- Type of video mostly watched:
  - (a) First choice: funny clips (28.6%), cartoons (28.6%), games (21.4%) music (17.9%)
  - (b) Second choice: music (40.9%), movies (31.8%), games (18.2%) pornography (4.5%) funny clips (4.5%)
  - (c) Third choice: movies (26.6%), pornography (15.8%), music (15.8%) games (15.8%),
    cartoons (5.3%), betting (5.3%) series (movies) (5.3%)
- Watching of videos in open room (61%); watching videos from the bedroom (25%)
- Results revealed that 50% of the children had online chat friends. 54% have met their chat mates. 30.8% chat mates were from inside the country. 10.4% chat mates were from outside the country. 50.7% had chat mates from both inside and outside the country.
Case Scenarios

Online experiences that last

Unlike most children of his age, Alex Bahati, 16, is privileged to have a smart phone at his disposal when he is at home during school holidays. Alex lives with his two younger siblings and a house help. His parents work with an international NGO and their work demands a lot of travel which keeps them away from the family most of the time.

The flat where Alex lives is fixed with free Wi-Fi, giving him unrestricted internet access.

At Domus Marie Secondary School where he is in Form one, the Deputy Principal, Mr. Thomson, reported that Alex is one among a couple of students who are withdrawn and sleepy in class most of the time. His parents have also pleaded with the school administration to give Alex some special attention because he is addicted to the internet.

Some events of seven years ago remain vividly clear. While giving a workshop on “Internet Safety to teens during a transition event (initiation seminar also used as an alternative to FGM for girls) held at a local Church in Ngong, in the outskirts of Nairobi, two boys approached me (Clement Njoroge, Founder of MediaNet Works and the Safe Online Safe Onland Project) seeking help on how to deal with addiction to internet pornography.

During the event, majority of other children innocently confessed they chat online with people they do not know and would be happy to meet them face to face. “They are just social media friends, we discuss anything with them because they are available even though we have not met,” some of them confessed to me, oblivious to the dangers they exposed themselves to from the so-called online friends.

Survey Results

Question: Sex of respondents

The survey participation consisted of both boys and girls in order to remove gender bias. All the participants had equal chances of being selected to participate in the survey. The total number of children who participated in the survey was 94; 78% male; 22% female, as shown in the pie chart (Figure 1).

![Figure 1: Gender composition of the children](image)
Question: Age of the Respondents

The target respondents were children, most of who were of school-going age. They were distributed from 10 to 21 years as shown in the bar graph Figure 2. The age distribution reveals that majority of those who participated in the interviews were between 13 and 17 years of age. The ages with the highest participation were 16 years with 17 children, 14 years with 16 children and 13 years with 13 children.

Figure 2: Age counts for the participating children

Question: Do you use internet?

The Internet has the capacity to expose children to danger. Children and young people today are digital natives and are increasingly using online platforms to access information, download material, play online games and chat with friends and peers; all of which can be detrimental to their moral development.

From the survey it was clear that over one third of the participants have access to, and use the internet. Internet use by children means that there exists infrastructure and equipment to host this technological divide which has hooked our children, as witnessed in our public transport services. Cheap android phones have made it possible for these children to access the internet. The results from the survey showed that 34% were using internet compared to 66% who were not.

Figure 3(a): Do you use internet?

84.9% of those using the internet were between 13 to 19 years of age. Further, the results showed 10.6% of those below 13 years were using the internet. All the participants above 19 years reported having access to the internet, as shown in Figure (3b).
Figure 3(b): Do you use internet? By age group

Question: How long do you use the internet?

The survey further aimed at establishing how long on average per day those who reported using the internet were online. This gives a feel of the time the children were busy on internet connected activities on average per day. Time spent online may be categorized as productive access to internet, but this may not necessarily be the case since most could be spending this time chatting with their peers and even with people whose identity they do not know. The big question here is: are the children using the internet time productively? As shown in Figure 3, 39.4% were using internet between 30 minutes to 2 hours, 13.8% between to 2 to 4 hours and 14.9% were connecting for over 4 hours per day.

Figure 4: How long do you use the internet?

Question: Do you have an internet account?

Opening of an internet account requires a disclosure that the applicant is over 18 years of age. For a person to qualify to open an account like email, Facebook, Twitter etc, one has to disclose that they are over 18 years. For one to register a mobile phone SIM card, they must produce their national identity card, meaning they would have to be 18 years and above.

The survey asked if the interviewees had an internet account. 32% answered in the affirmative while 62% did not have one.
As shown in Figure 6, the survey confirmed that 23% of the under 18 years old had an internet account in contravention of the terms and conditions stipulated in access to operate the account. This shows the magnitude of dishonesty that the children engage in to access internet accounts.

**Question: Through which gadget do you access the internet?**

Mobile phone use is pegged to the fact that it must have a sim card. Under the laws of Kenya, all SIM cards must be registered. This implies that the children under 18 years were using their own phones whose lines were registered for them by their caretakers/parents. Participants above 18 years probably owned their lines legally. The interviewees were asked to indicate the gadgets through which they accessed the internet. Results in Figure 7(a) revealed that 33% accessed internet through normal phones, 18% from computers, 11.7% laptops and 5.4% through high end gadgets- iPhones and iPads.
Online Streets are Risky too

Tony Chege is 18 years now. He was rescued from the streets when he was 13. He now lives in Kivuli Centre – a street children rehabilitation centre run by Koinonia Community – where, during his school holidays, he is a member of the support staff.

Tony is an avid user of the internet, albeit wisely. He confessed that he learnt how to use the internet while on the streets where he whiled away his time in cybercafés playing computer games and betting games, downloading movies and music or in chat rooms. He would then retire to sleep in a video show room which doubled up as a lodging place for the homeless. He would pay less than a dollar for a place to lay his head but also spend the night watching adult movies.

It is against this backdrop that “Safe Online Safe Onland” project was conceived.

MediaNet has since then been holding presentations on internet safety seminars in local schools, churches and events organized for children.

It is now evident that as internet becomes accessible and affordable in Kenya, children and youth are at a higher risk of abuse; therefore, the need for an initiative that will address the risks that children face while online cannot be gainsaid.

The Internet is like a knife

Yes, the internet is a double-edged sword. Faced with the new challenges it poses, different actors need to come together through individual initiatives and institutional interventions to promote and encourage safe and responsible use of the Internet and social media among our children and young people.

Figure 7(a): Through which gadget do you access the internet?

The gadget use by age group shows that iPhones are accessed more by the 13 to 19 year olds. Laptops and computers are more used to access internet by children below 13 years, as shown in Figure 7(b)
Figure 7(b): Through which gadget do you access the internet? By age group

Question: From where do you access internet?

It is clear from the results that many of the children own phones from which they personally access the internet. These phones maybe have been bought for them by their relatives or parents. Asked from where they accessed the internet, 33% indicated it was from their phones, 28.7% from school computer labs, 7.4% from cybercafés, 4.3% from mother’s phone, 4.3% and 3.2% from father’s phone, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: From where do you access internet?
Question: What kind of content do you download from the internet?

Internet access and use by children should be seen as an avenue through which they develop their skills either in academics or improve their moral and social wellbeing. Unfortunately, unsupervised downloading of content download may have a negative, far reaching, life changing impact on the development of children. This, moreover, may lead to sexual abuse and moral degradation of the children.

The survey attempted to establish the kind of contents participants download from the internet, as shown in Figure 9. Videos (29.8%), music (21.3%) and games (20.2%) accounted for a combined 70% of the content downloaded. Cartoons recorded 6.4% and school exercises 6.4%.

Figure 9: What kind of content do you download from the internet?

![Chart showing content downloaded]

The survey further asked the interviewees to indicate the kind of videos they usually watch. The results revealed that music formed the highest proportion of the watched videos accounting for 44.7% followed by cartoons with 29.8% with games coming third with 11.7%, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: What kind of videos do you watch?

![Chart showing videos watched]

Question: Write down 3 most common videos you like watching

The survey gave the interviewees a chance to write down the three most common videos they like watching. Listed first as most commonly watched videos as shown in Figure 11(a): funny clips (28.6%), cartoons (28.6%), games (21.4%), music (17.9%) football (3.6%).
Figure 11(a): Write down 3 most common videos you like watching (choose one)

Listed second as most commonly watched videos as presented in Figure 11(b): music and movies accounted for over 70% while games recorded 18.2%. Pornography and funny clips accounted for 4.5% each.

Figure 11(b): Write down 3 most common video you like watching (choice two)

Listed third as most commonly watched videos as presented in Figure 11(c): movies accounted for 26.6%, followed by pornography, music and games each recording 15.8%. Cartoons, betting and series (movies) each recorded 5.3%.

Figure 11(c): Write down 3 most common videos you like watching (choice three)
**Question: Where do you watch the videos from?**

The respondents were further required to record where they watch the videos from. This may give an indicator of the level of privacy required for the contents of the videos being watched. A video being watched alone by the child, in the bedroom, may indicate some level of inappropriate contents which could include nudity and/or pornography. Those who were mostly watching videos in an open room with others were 61% compared to 25% who were watching from the bedroom.

![Figure 12: Where do you watch the video from?](image)

**Question: Who else do you watch internet programs with?**

The participants were required to disclose with whom else they were watching the internet programs. The compiled data revealed that 58.55% were watching with their friends, while 11.7% were watching with their teachers. Watching with the parents accounted for 10.6% as shown Figure 13.

![Figure 13: Who else do you watch internet programs with?](image)

**Question: Do you have online friends who you chat with on the internet?**

The survey sought to establish the chat characteristics of the respondent by asking them if they had online friends whom they chat with on the internet. The results revealed that 50% of the children had online chat friends while 47% did not have as shown in Figure 14. This is a clear revelation that the children were exposed to online friends some of whom may not have above board intentions. Impropriety may include sharing of inappropriate content, not to mention soliciting for nude photo sharing and sex. This creates an opportunity for online harassment for the otherwise would be innocent children.
Question: Through what do you chat with them?

The children who reported having online friends were further required to give the method they mostly used to chat with them. The results revealed that Whatsapp was the most popular medium, used by 29.8% of the respondents. This was followed by facebook (14.9%) while SMS and normal line had a combined share of 9.6% as shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Through what do you chat with them?
Question: What is the location of these internet friends?

The location of the friends the children chat with was categorized as inside or outside the country. The results revealed that of the children who reported the location of the friends they chat with, 30.8% were from inside the country while 10.4% were from outside the country. 50.7% had both inside and outside the country, as shown in Figure 16. This shows the extent of the exposure of the children to chat friends whose identity they may not know and who pose the threat of negative influence and disbursement of content that may be inappropriate for the development of the children.

Figure 16: What is the location of these internet friends?

![Figure 16: What is the location of these internet friends?](image1)

Question: Have you ever met them?

Those who had chat friends inside and outside the country were required to indicate if they had ever met any of them. Results from the survey showed that 54% had met their chat mates with 46% indicating they had not made any physical contact with the subject, as shown in Figure 17. This reveals that internet among children has had an impact of making children meet with chat mates even without necessarily knowing them; hence the questions- who were they meeting and what type of danger were they subjecting themselves to?

Figure 17: Have you ever met them?

![Figure 17: Have you ever met them?](image2)

Question: How many friends do have online?

The size of friends acquired through online internet was measured through asking the respondents to indicate how many friends they had on their online platform. The results indicated that 34% did not have online friends, 34% had 50 but fewer than 100, while 12.8% had 5 friends and below, as shown in Figure 18.

![Figure 18: How many friends do have online?](image3)
Our grand plans

Safe Online, Safe Onland is a project of MediaNet Works in partnership with Koinonia Community, a Child Protection Non-profit organization. Safe Online Safe Onland is supported by Internet Society (ISOC) Kenya Chapter. The project aims to implement an Internet Safety Project for Children, entitled “Safe Online, Safe Onland” which will benefit over 700 former street children now living and schooling in Koinonia Community’s rehabilitation and rescue centres.

The project will provide an opportunity for children to learn new life skills on how to use the Internet effectively and safely, for their personal, intellectual and spiritual development.

Children living in, or rescued from difficult circumstances will benefit from the project’s activities and from information on how to use the internet responsibly and positively. To ensure this initiative leaves an indelible mark in the society, the project will build the capacity of the local community to ensure local ownership, sustainability and continuity of this initiative beyond the project period.
**Conclusion and Recommendations**

**Recommendations**

a) Create more awareness in children, through seminars and trainings, of risks and benefits of online access.

b) Parents and caretakers of children need to be sensitized on how to monitor what content their children are accessing and their potential to harm, especially through cyber bullying.

c) Government should enact legislation that promotes children's protection from harmful online content. The government should not turn a blind eye on the social media owners and their role in content access by children.

d) Train teachers on the methods of handling the children when they are online and on the possible impact the content would have on learners' academic performance.

e) Tap into the great reserves of knowledge that are available online, thereby, exposing children to innovative ideas and a greater understanding of the world around them to enhance their mastery of the environment.

f) Enact policies and regulations governing online spaces, including cybercafés, in order to control access to online materials by children.

g) Studies of this nature should be funded to cover all children in our counties in order to come up with area specific recommendations to safeguard the future of our children.

**Conclusion**

h) Children who are under age are having access to contents which are inappropriate.

i) It's clear from the study that under age children are having internet accounts contrary to the standard regulations.

j) Phones are in usage by children and from the look of thing the sim cards are either registered by their care givers/parents or friends.

k) A lot of precious time is being used by kids on chatting/watching videos and listening to music online at the expense of academics or other time use that would be geared to changing their social wellbeing.

l) Children have been exposing themselves to hazards like meeting online friends which may result into sexual harassment or even kidnappings and other crimes.

m) The children have been left to themselves and exposed to all types of cyber bullying and inappropriate online contents without due measure being taken to safeguard their wellbeing and nurturing.

**References**

BASIC REPORT: Based on 2015/16 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS) 2018

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN KENYA - A RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT February 2018

Parenting for a Digital Future: Survey Report 1 - 6 February 2018


**Useful Contacts for Online Child Safety**

www.medianetworks.or.ke

www.childlinekenya.co.ke

www.ca.go.ke
‘Safe online, Safe Onland’ Internet Safety Program
Internet & Social Media Safety for Children

Keeping CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE Safe Online while creating job opportunities

Through

- Research on what children think about digital media and how they are using it.
- Training of Trainers (ToT): consists of multimedia presentations designed to teach participants to implement Internet Safety Programs
- Facilitate Internet Safety Seminars in Schools/Churches/Community meetings

This initiative aims to

- Keep children safe on the internet
- Create job opportunities for the college/youth through an internship program serving communities as internet safety coaches.

HOW

Through a partnership program between MediaNet Works and ISOC with County Governments, ISPs, ICT Industry Media, Corporates/Donors/FBO/Individuals to implement the “Safe Online, Safe Onland” program.

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