

Ofcom's Media Use and Attitudes Report 2023

Communications regulator Ofcom has released their annual [Media Use and Attitudes Report](#) that looks at recent online trends and the attitudes of children and parents across the UK.



The report provides an insight into the media use, attitudes and understanding of children and young people aged 3-17. It also looks at how the parents of this age group are monitoring and managing their child's online activity and their views on the same. Some of the statistics produced in this report provide interesting reading.

The positives and negatives of being online ... The Media Use and Attitudes report gives an overview on the positive and negative aspects experienced by children and young people online.

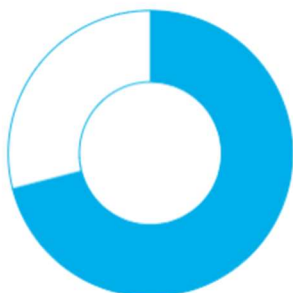
Ofcom found that children aged 12-17 and their parents often recognised there were benefits to going online:

- ✓ Helps with schoolwork/homework (**81% children, 84% parents**).
- ✓ Building or maintaining friendships (**68% children, 65% parents**).
- ✓ Developing creative skills (**45% children, 50% parents**).

On the other hand,

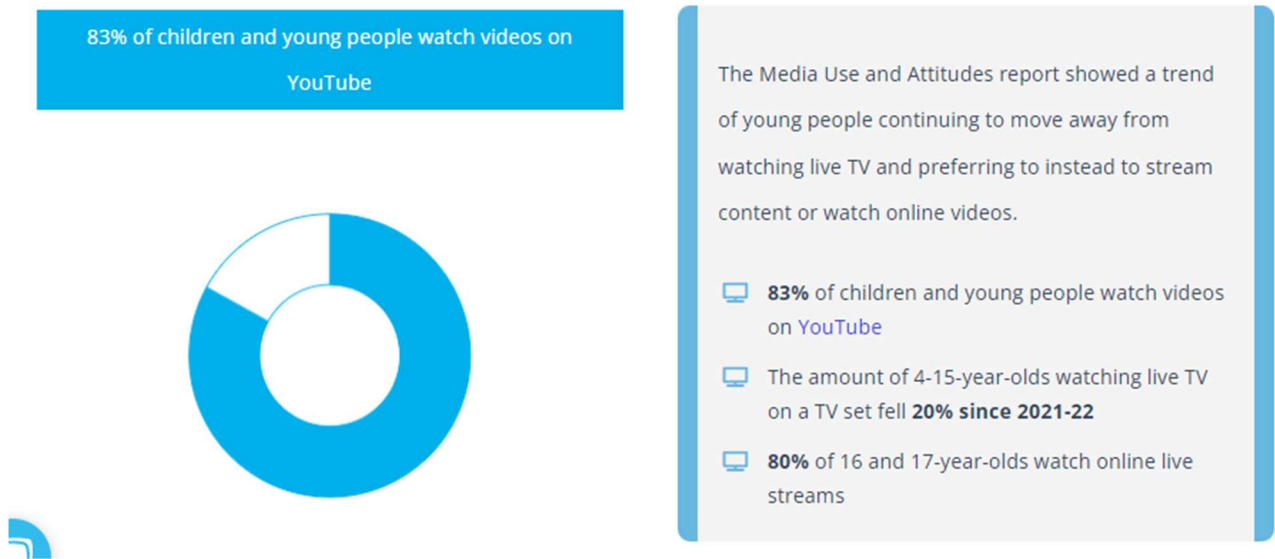
- ✗ **Two fifths of 8-17-year-olds** thought that people were mean or unkind to other people on social media, messaging apps or sites **all or most of the time**.
- ✗ **26%** believed that there was pressure to be popular on these types of platforms **all or most of the time**.
- ✗ Less than **three in ten** parents of 3-17-year-olds (**28%**) believed the benefits of their child using social media, messaging and video-sharing apps or sites outweighed the risks.

71% of children aged 5-15 years old have seen hateful content online



- ✗ **29%** of children aged 8-17 had experienced a person being nasty or hurtful to them via a communication technology (such as an app, social media site, gaming or mobile phone).
- ✗ **71%** of children aged 5-15 years old have seen hateful content online, and **34%** have seen nude or nearly nude images or videos.
- ✗ **27%** of children aged 8-15 years old who use social media have experienced some form of cyberbullying.

Screen time - another aspect of the report looked at what children and young people are doing and watching whilst online.



Gaming - a significant amount of screen time is spent on gaming with the report highlighting the increases that have been happening.

The number of children gaming has increased, from 6 in 10 in last year's report, to 9 in 10 in this year's. When asked why they play games, the most popular reasons given were:

- It's fun (43%)
- To hang out with friends (24%)
- To hang out with family (12%)

A quarter of children aged 8-17 played games online with people they don't know and 22% chatted to people they didn't know when gaming.

Most used online platforms

WhatsApp and TikTok are some of the most used apps, with about half of all 3-17-year-olds using them. As children get older, their use of different apps changes. For example, despite WhatsApp's age restrictions being set at 16 in the UK, 25% of children aged 3 and 4 use WhatsApp, with that percentage jumping to 80% in 12-17-year-olds.



- A reassuring 91% of 8-17-year-olds had talked to someone about being safe online and 88% of those conversations were chatting with a family member.
- 86% of parents have spoken to their child about how to stay safe online, including the potential dangers of content on apps and sites that might be age inappropriate, sharing too much information and about being in contact with people they don't know.
- But learning how to be safe online isn't just happening at home. 80% of children and young people had also received information about how to use the internet safely by someone outside the family, most commonly through a teacher.

Talking about online safety

The Media Use and Attitudes report shows that lots of conversations about online safety are happening both at home and in the classroom. Reassuringly, parents and schools are playing a significant role in educating children and young people about keeping themselves safe online.

