

Childhood 2017

For children and teenagers, it is increasingly all about mobile

This year sees the resurgence of the mobile phone among five to 16 year olds, according to the latest 2017 CHILDWISE Monitor Report. Smartphones are now the default device for music, online access, gaming, video content and reading (after printed books), as young people seek endless entertainment - anywhere and everywhere¹.

The new data shows the extent to which the mobile phone now dominates children's media experiences, with ownership increasing steadily – especially among primary aged children² – and usage more varied than ever before. For the first time ever, children are now more likely to use their mobile phone to go online than for any other purpose, including texting or calling.

The 2017 CHILDWISE Monitor is a comprehensive annual report looking at five to 16 year olds media consumption, purchasing and social habits as well as key behaviour. Around 2000 children in schools across the United Kingdom completed in-depth online surveys for the report.

The report also reveals that tablet ownership has reached saturation point after years of rapid growth. Two thirds of children have their own touchscreen tablet at home.

Simon Leggett, research director from CHILDWISE says: "Our research suggests that children now expect to be constantly entertained. They want to fill every free moment they have. Tablets were a gateway to apps and the internet for many children – they were the technology of choice and widely endorsed by parents. Children now expect the same level of functionality when they're out and about, and the mobile phone delivers that" says Simon.

"Children expect to access their favourite media at all times, whether it is games, music, video content or social media," adds Simon Leggett. The report suggests that it is unlikely that tablet growth will increase much further, with two in three children now owning one.

"Tablets are not as portable as mobile phones and they don't work 'on the go' as easily as a mobile phone. This is why we have seen a modest resurgence of the mobile phone, which children can have with them and use at all times to fill any moment of boredom with gaming, viewing YouTube videos, catching up with social media or listening to music."

"The mobile phone is increasingly becoming a preferred go-to multimedia gadget for children overall. For primary aged children particularly, exposure to what a tablet can offer has left them wanting more, especially when they are outside the home."

¹ In the last week, 54% of children used their mobile phone to listen to music, 51% watched video content on them, 41% played games on them, and 60% ever use a mobile phone to go online.

² Mobile phone ownership has increased to 39% amongst 5-10 year olds, up from 35% a year ago.

“Children are now becoming adept at the positive skills of multi-tasking, prioritising and filtering through the huge amount of content available to them. When they find something that interests them, they will engage fully.”

Most children say their use of technology helps them learn and develop new interests. However, a significant minority are concerned about their over reliance on them³. Around one in four find it difficult to go several hours without checking them, say they have missed out on sleep because they have spent too long on gadgets and would like to spend more time away from them.

Three in 10 children say they have to check their connected devices every few minutes.⁴

Most teenagers break rules set for them for internet use and a significant minority of nine to 12 year olds go online longer than they are allowed, or when they shouldn't.

Findings of the report also include...

- Children claim to use the internet for an average of three hours a day. One in eight say they spend more than six hours online per day.
- The gender pay gap starts at home – with boys receiving more than girls in terms of regular income, whether pocket money, allowance or money from a paid job or chores.
- The oldest girls, traditionally least likely to take part in sport, have increased their participation in school sports this year. Most older girls now take part in some sort of sport.
- Social networking sites are more popular than texting for children to keep in touch with one another outside school.
- YouTube is the most popular website among children this year, far ahead of second place favourite Snapchat, and is the most popular video on demand service, ahead of second place Netflix - almost all children use YouTube.
- Children are now just as likely to watch content on their mobile phone as on a TV set.
- A quarter of nine to 16s turn off or get around safety controls when they go online

CHILDWISE is an independent market research agency specialising in children and young people. CHILDWISE has a programme of published independent research and also conducts research for government agencies, charities, broadcasters, publishers and brands www.childwise.co.uk

The Monitor Report 2017 covers... Tablets and technology; websites and applications; gaming, YouTube; mobile phones; TV viewing; video on demand; music; reading ; children's equipment; money; purchasing; sports & activities; health & wellbeing and social awareness.

Editorial notes: For further press releases, more information, or to interview Simon Leggett please contact Liz Hollis 07880 680302 liz@lizhollis.co.uk

³ 26% of 9-16 year olds find it difficult to go for several hours without checking their connected devices, and 21% say they would like to spend more time without these devices.

⁴ On average, 31% of children have to check every few minutes on average, rising to 42% of 17-18 year olds.