

Press release

## **Childhood 2021: new independent report**

### **TikTok is dominating children's social networking, helping them cope with lockdown – and mobile phone ownership increases**

Children are spending more time online this year, up to 3.8 hours a day from 3.4 last year, with TikTok now the prevailing social networking app/website, according to the new 2021 CHILDWISE Monitor Report.

The number of children with a mobile phone has also increased for the second consecutive year, with levels now equal to the peak recorded in 2008. 73% now have a phone and half of 5-10-year olds have their own handset.

'Children are communicating via TikTok and its use surged during lockdown. Perhaps, scrolling the app showed children how others were dealing with the challenges of 2020, providing light relief with Covid memes and the type of dark humour this Generation Z love,' says Simon.

'The app allows children to endlessly scroll without an end until you choose to stop. Everything is short so your attention doesn't need to last beyond around 30 seconds.'

'Children are spending more of their free time online and TikTok has been really important for kids this year as use of the app surged under lockdown,' says Simon Leggett, research director at CHILDWISE.

TikTok nearly doubled in popularity this year with around one in five children naming it as their favourite site. Girls, especially older girls, are far more likely to name it than boys.

'TikTok offers a sense of togetherness with everybody learning the same choreography and posting the exact same dance moves. This can make children feel part of a community, joining millions around the world doing the same dance.'

YouTube remains the top website/app but its popularity continues to decrease as TikTok gains ground. TikTok has taken over from the previously more popular Snapchat and is more favoured than Instagram.

'Daily usage of YouTube has dropped back only marginally, but mainly among the youngest children age 5-6. Overall, children still watch the same amount of YouTube – an average of 2.3 hours a day.'

Almost half of children say the majority of their viewing is on demand now, rising from two in five last year.

An increasing number of children are also accessing the internet in their own room.

The 2021 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.

Findings of the report also include...

- Children's average weekly income has dropped to £9.10 from £11.50, with paid job income plummeting and ad-hoc payments from parents increasing.
- An increase in time spent watching video content with almost half of children watching mostly on demand rather than linear TV.
- Surge in online social gaming with a doubling of the number of children naming a social gaming website as their favourite.
- Gaming consoles overtake tablets for the first time as favoured device for on-demand viewing.
- Access to all types of devices in the home (tablet, laptop, smart speaker, phone, desktop, games console) has increased this year.
- Data on how lockdown has affected children, including 45% worrying they have fallen behind with schoolwork; 70% feeling they have benefitted from spending more time with family and 52% feeling happier not going to school during lockdown.
- The CHILDWISE Buzz Bulletin – Kids in Lockdown Report, which talked to children before, during, and after lockdown 1.0, will be released in mid-February 2021.

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](http://www.childwise.co.uk)

The Monitor Report 2021 covers... Technology, Websites and Apps, YouTube, Gaming, Viewing Habits, Services and Content, Mobile Phones, Music, Reading, Equipment, Money, Purchasing, Sport and Activities, Health and Wellbeing, Lockdown.

This report looks at children's media consumption and purchasing behaviour, and at aspects of their wider life, presenting data from a sample of around 2000 children aged 5–16 years across the United Kingdom.

This is the 27th year that the survey has been conducted, following its introduction in 1994. The report interviewed 1,976 children and young people aged between 5 and 16 years.

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