SAFE INTERNET USE FOR CHILDREN: AN ANALYSIS OF AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS FOR INTERNET LITERACY FUNDED UNDER THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S SAFER INTERNET PROGRAMME

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Abstract

The issue of protection of minors on the Internet poses a big challenge for policy-makers. For this reason, the policy tool of awareness campaign for media and Internet literacy has grown to become very important. The present research examines the policy by the European Commission to fund national level awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children, by asking the question which input factors are more significant for the success of the awareness campaigns. For this purpose, compared are three case studies – the awareness campaigns in Bulgaria, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The main conclusion was that higher level of support from national authorities is related to better dissemination of the awareness campaign in the formal educational system, which in theory ensures that the optimal number of children will be reached. Within the three cases, the institutional support seems to be a more significant input factor than the communication strategies and the educational content of the awareness campaigns. In the light of the findings, the paper offers three recommendations to the European Commission. The first is to demand more national-level institutional support of the projects by encouraging participation of national public agencies in the campaigns and public co-funding. The second is to require the campaign coordinators to track the percentage of schools where they distribute the campaign's educational materials and potentially link this performance indicator to an increase of funding for a subsequent round. The third recommendation is to encourage more knowledge spill-over between the funded awareness campaigns of content formatting strategies in order to increase the average time visitors spend on the awareness websites and thus, increase the potential effectiveness of the educational content.

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Introduction

In a time when children younger than 10 years of age are already active and independent users of the Internet (Eurobarometer 2007: 6), the protection of minors in cyberspace poses a big challenge for policy-makers on a global, regional and national level. The Internet users are no longer mere recipients, they become an active audience; they interact with other consumers, they produce content themselves. For this reason "consuming" Internet-based services is notoriously different from "consuming" linear broadcasts. Not only is the user's perspective radically changed, but also regulation mechanisms are inevitably altered. Due to the utilization of a scarce public resource – the radio spectrum – in most countries traditional terrestrial broadcasting has been and still is subject to heavy regulation. However, as the Internet is a decentralized global network and clear jurisdiction in many cases is hard to establish, cyberspace "appears inherently beyond governance" (Price and Verhulst 2005: 1).

This is the reason for a constant search[1] for regulatory remedies, especially in such a sensitive policy domain as the protection of minors. The discussion usually outlines three possible approaches as alternatives to statutory regulation – parental control over children's Internet use; industry self-regulation; and Internet literacy and education. Unlike the United States, in the European context, parental control has not been a preferred measure in broadcasting regulation; there is a tradition and an expectation from the parents that the state will not delegate all regulating functions solely to them (see Livingstone 2002). Furthermore, many current parents seem to lag behind their children in web competences. The main problems of industry self-

[1] e.g. on international fora like the Internet Governance Forum

regulation on the Internet come on the one hand from the dispersed nature of the Internet and on the other - from the difficulty in assigning responsibilities to all the different industry actors in the value chain. As a result, policy makers also beyond the European Union encourage literacy raising and education activities. Most researchers find such policy responses as empowering and shifting the "self" of self-regulation towards the consumers rather than the producers or providers (e.g. Buckingham 2002; Price and Verhulst 2005: 119).

This thesis paper focuses on the Internet literacy policy of the European Commission. The main tool to increase Internet literacy in the EU is the Safer Internet Programme – a funding mechanism that provides, *inter alia*, financial assistance for national-level safe Internet centres. They are made up by different consortia of organizations engaged in the implementation and coordination of the activities of the awareness campaigns for safe internet use for children.

The policy was initially launched in 1999. Since then, two successive programmes have been approved (2005-2008; 2009-2013). After the end of each programme period, there has been a standard evaluation process, delegated by the European Commission to independent outside experts. Those evaluations have been concerned primarily with the administrative aspect and based on their recommendations the Commission has introduced small changes in the application procedure.

The evaluation reports have not, however, analysed the policy to raise awareness on safe Internet usage itself and have not advised on how the awareness raising activities can be made more effective as a tool. This is what the present research seeks to do – to analyse the performance and underlying success factors of three awareness campaigns in order to provide recommendations to the European

Commission for the upcoming round for proposals for funding from the Safer Internet Programme.

The first question that needs to be answered is: How does the implementation of awareness campaigns funded under the same instrument and using the same guidelines differ across countries? This description is necessary for the analysis seeking to answer the main research question: What are the success input factors for awareness campaigns for safe Internet use? For that reason, the research looks at three types of input factors: communication strategies, educational content of the awareness campaign, and level of support from public agencies.

Nevertheless, assessing a communication policy aimed at a change in behaviour (towards safer use of the Internet), means essentially to track a behavioural change. This is beyond the capabilities of this study. This is why this research will focus not on "success" or "effectiveness" *per se*, but rather on "potential for success" and "performance". In order to evaluate the "potential for success", a lot of reference has been drawn from literature on information campaigns in another domain – health. The reason is that health communication is a field that has used extensively awareness campaigns as a policy tool and numerous campaigns have already been analysed and evaluated through tracking behavioural change (Salmon 1989; Backer et al 1992; Hornik 1997; Hornik and Yanovitzky 2003). This body of literature provides the theoretical conditions for effective communication campaigns.

The research is built around a preliminary hypothesis that if a public agency has the leading role in the development and dissemination of an awareness campaign, as compared to another type of organization, the awareness campaign will be more successful. The hypothesis is derived on the one hand from health communication research (Hornik and Yanovitzky 2003) and on the other – from media literacy

literature (Livingstone 2008). The reason to expect this is that literacy raising campaigns run by public agencies usually have an undoubted legitimacy in the eyes of educationalists and they will be more open to include the messages of the campaign in the formal educational system.

To test the hypothesis on the participation on public agencies in the awareness campaign and to answer the research questions, three cases of such awareness nodes funded under the Safer Internet Programme were selected for a comparative study – the British, Bulgarian, and Slovenian campaigns. Compared will be the communication strategies of the awareness campaigns, the educational content, and – most centrally for this study – the role of public agencies. The three campaigns are implemented by significantly different consortia of stakeholders. The analysis will aim to find if there is a more successful configuration, and should participation of a certain type of organization, e.g. a public agency, be encouraged by the European Commission through funding requirements.

Chapter 1 outlines the methodology of the study. Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework on policies for protection of minors on the Internet and media literacy and awareness campaigns as policy tools. Chapter 3 discusses the link between theory and the measurement of awareness campaigns. Chapter 4 is the comparative research part of the thesis and will analyse the input factors and the performance of the three awareness campaigns. Lastly, the findings in the conclusion of the paper will serve as a basis for the recommendations to the European Commission for the upcoming round for funding proposals for awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children.

Chapter 1. Methodology: Case selection and performance measurement

The three cases in the comparative analysis are the awareness campaigns in three quite different EU Member States – Bulgaria, Slovenia and the UK. They are selected via purposeful criterion-based sampling, proposed by Patton (2002: 238), with four selection criteria:

1. At least 50% funding from the EC Safer Internet Programme;
2. Participation in the pan-European network of awareness nodes InSafe, which encourages best practices spill-over;
3. Similar website architecture and design;
4. Difference in the configuration of stakeholders participating in the project.

The first two criteria for case selection are quite obvious, since the purpose of the study is to evaluate the EU policy for protection of minors on the Internet. The third criterion eliminates significant variance in the level of success that could be explained by poor design and usability of the campaign websites. The last is instrumental for identifying which combinations of participants in the awareness campaigns tend to be more successful.

The first case is the awareness campaign in the UK. It is chosen because it is among the very few cases of awareness campaigns funded by the Safer Internet Programme in which instead of a variety of stakeholders involved, there was by the time of the research only one public agency as a single participant (a subdivision of the British police). The second campaign is in one of the newest member states – Bulgaria. The project participants in the Bulgarian campaign include a non-governmental research institute as coordinator, a civil society organization, an

electronic sports federation and an advertising agency as consortium partners. The third campaign is the Slovenian where the configuration of participating stakeholders includes the main public university as a coordinator of the project, a consumers' association and a public body responsible for connecting to the Internet institutions like schools and museums as consortium partners.

Interview strategy

The main sources of information are practitioner interviews, conducted with the project coordinating organizations' contact people in Sofia, Ljubljana and London. The "interview guide approach" (Patton 2002: 349) was chosen, because the number of respondents was very small and comprehensive answers were of great value. A more standardised format such as closed fixed-response interview might have yielded non-comprehensive data and "mechanistic responses" (Patton 2002: 349).

The second type of interview used in the study is opinion interviews with experts on media literacy and media policy. They are instrumental for the construction of some of the assessment criteria. The interviews were conducted especially for the purposes of this research (see List of experts). The chosen technique was informal conversational interviews.

Measurement

The success of awareness campaigns is inherently hard to measure, because what needs to be evaluated is the behavioural change in the target audience. This is why this study will first measure the potential for success based on three input factors – communication strategies, content and institutional support:

1. Strategies for more effective awareness campaigns outlined in the academic literature in the field of information campaigns and social marketing (Salmon 1989; Backer et al 1992; Hornik 2003).

2. Comprehensive content, whereby the broad categories in the checklist are based on one policy document (Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU 2009) and the specific risks are based on the expert opinion interviews and the academic literature on media and Internet literacy (Buckingham 2002; Livingstone 2004 and 2008; Livingstone and Hargrave 2006; etc.)
3. Level of institutional support based on the participation of public agencies in project consortia, involvement in advisory bodies for the awareness campaigns and amount of complementary public funding.

The actual performance of the three awareness campaigns will be measured in two ways. The first indicator is the estimated percentage of schools reached through dissemination of educational material, workshops and presentations. The information was provided by the project coordinators during interviews. The second measure of the performance of the campaigns is a set of quantitative indicators – visits on the awareness campaign websites and the received citizens' reports through reporting mechanisms such as hotlines. This quantitative data was gathered though the campaign websites, from the annual reports of the campaigns and directly from the coordinating organizations.

However, the three awareness campaigns are targeting national audiences in three very different countries – in terms of population size and internet penetration. This is why visits and citizens' reports will be measured and compared per Internet user. The data for the number of Internet users in the three countries comes from the free online resource Internet World Stats. Another quantitative measure – average time on site – can also be used for a direct comparison. This indicator says a lot about the quality of the content available on the awareness websites.

The research will match the potential for success based on the three main input factors to the actual performance of the three awareness campaigns. The aim will be to see whether the campaigns differ in implementation and performance, what are the reasons for that and which input factors tend to be more important.

Chapter 2. Media literacy and awareness campaigns – theory and policy

2.1. Protection of minors - between state and parental responsibility

In most democratic countries children under the legal age limit are under the responsibility of either their parents or the state. Experts see the reason for that in the nature of cognitive and social development: the transition from "other-control" to "self-control" is explained by the children's need to rely on others "to perform regulating functions for them" (Shaffer 1996: 248).

In a more traditional notion of society and family, which is still prevailing in European countries (e.g. see McGlynn 2006), it is the parents who are the instance of control or regulation, and also of care and protection. Meanwhile, the state, via its relevant agencies, is there to make sure that parents keep up with their responsibilities. The rights of the child and the mandate of who is to protect them are specified not only in national constitutions, but also in international documents. The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that states have to deliver "appropriate assistance to parents (…) in the performance of their childrearing responsibilities" (UNCRC, Article 18 (2)).

Similarly, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is concerned with the children's well-being. The document stipulates that "children shall have the right to such protection and care as is necessary for their well-being" (CFREU: Article 24).

The same notion of caring for children's well-being explains the rationale for broadcasting regulation for protection of minors. The provisions in the European broadcasting regulations deal with the sometimes hardly distinguishable concepts of

"offence" (TWFD Article 12; AVMSD Recital 37) and "harm", "impairment" or "detriment" (Television Without Frontiers Directive Articles 16 and 22; Audiovisual Media Services Directive Article 3e, Recitals 37, 44). Livingston and Hargave (2006: 8) see harm as being the more objective and more measurable term, because it is "taken to be observable by others", while offence is the more subjective concept, "experienced and reported by the individual".

Most of the existing research focuses on what is deemed harmful for children and young people rather than on what these two groups would find offensive. Studies alarm of the inability of younger children to differentiate fact from fiction or to recognise advertising on television (e.g. Kunkel 2004) and also of the negative effects of television violence on the children's psyche (e.g. Zuckerman and Zuckerman 1985).

As Livingstone and Hargrave (2006) emphasise, the prevention of the risk of harm is different than the prevention of offence. According to them "the market can be assumed to address offence (since it damages the brand), while public intervention may be additionally required to prevent harm" (Livingstone and Hargrave 2006: 9). The public intervention on the European Union level in this domain begins with the Television Without Frontiers Directive (1989), which introduces content regulation of broadcasting under the objective of protection of minors. The directive (Article 22) prohibits programmes which might "seriously impair" the physical, mental or moral development of minors (e.g. pornography or extreme violence). Programmes that might just be "harmful" must either be encrypted or broadcasted at a time when they will not normally be seen by minors (the so-called "watershed"), preceded by an acoustic signal and clearly identifiable by a visual symbol (*ibid*). It also prohibits alcohol advertisement directed to or depicting children as well as commercial

communication specifically targeting minors and aiming to exploit “their inexperience or credulity” (TWFD Articles 15 and 16).

The new Audiovisual Media Services Directive amends the old document and expands the scope of application from broadcast media also to some new media services such as video-on-demand (AVMSD Chapter IIB, Article 3h). It further strengthens the rules for advertising by prohibiting advertisement of unhealthy food and beverages in children's programmes (AVMSD Article 3e (2)).

Although this directive captures some Internet-based services, the online environment has been largely left out of the scope of statutory content regulation for protection of minors. In addition to the directives, the European institutions have also issued Recommendation 2006/952/EC on the protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and information services. The document attempts to cover more online content by insisting on the creation of filtering technologies to prevent access to pornography and on the uptake of content labelling systems for material distributed over the Internet (European Parliament 2006: II/1, II/3).

However, it has been recognised both by scholars (Buckingham 2002; Livingstone 2002, 2004; Pavlik 2008) and by policy-makers (Livingstone et al on behalf of Ofcom 2005; Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU 2009) that the risks for children on the Internet go well beyond content and include other categories.

A lot of the potential threats on the Internet are not exclusively related to children – e.g. virus, spyware, spam, phishing. Some risks such as privacy-related threats affect both young users and adults, but it is widely perceived that children are more vulnerable (e.g. Buckingham 2002; Livingstone and Hargrave 2006, etc.) and that actually it is in their nature to be “risk-takers” (Byron 2008: 108).

The European Commission in a recent policy document classified the risks in three simple categories:

- "content" (sub-divided in "illegal" and "harmful" or "age-inappropriate");
- "contact" (by default unwanted: e.g. being a target of grooming, cyber-bullying)
-"conduct" (e.g. privacy protection of the self and of others; "netiquette", involving in cyber-bullying)

(Safer Social Networking Principles 2009: 3).

The specific threats for children, identified in the academic literature can all be classified under these categories. David Buckingham (2002) proposed five perceived threats for children: bad influence and imitative behaviour; negative moral and ideological effects on children; accessibility of pornography; children becoming a target of paedophiles; and direct selling and gathering of market research data from children. (Buckingham 2002: 78). John Pavlik's research adds two other categories of problems – "false and misleading information" and "the temptation to share copyrighted music and video files illegally" (Pavlik 2008: 273). Furthermore, new developments expand the list with phenomena such as cyber-bullying and sexting (exchange of self-produced erotic images), as well as issues such as netiquette and Internet addiction.

Clearly, the policy challenge is twofold: not only the array of risks is expanded, but also children's interaction with the Internet in comparison to broadcast media is also changed towards a more convenient, private and easy use (Livingstone and Hargrave 2006: 12).

2.2. The policy responses

The rationale for regulatory intervention in the field of protection of minors on the Internet is similar to the rationale for regulation for protection of minors in

broadcast media – potentially harmful content and potential abuse of the inexperience of children. In addition, the privacy-related threats for children on the Internet relate to the legal ability of underage users to consent to giving away personal information, which is legally a prerogative of their parents.

According to media law expert Terry Flew, the Internet policy in most countries is "the application and extension of laws developed for other media and communication technologies" (Flew 2005: 202). The Internet also challenges classic regulation, because neither the identity of the rule makers, nor the instruments to enforce them are clear (Price and Verhulst 2005: 1). However, a deregulatory regime would potentially pose a risk to the safe online experience of children and young users (Livingstone 2008: 115). This is why the regulatory paradigm for the Internet had to shift "towards more self-regulation by both providers and users" (Salomon 2009: 207).

Naturally the first policy alternative for protection of minors in cyberspace would be parental control – an option preferred in some jurisdictions also in broadcasting regulation (e.g. the US). However, expert Sonia Livingstone sees that in the European context of strict broadcasting regulation for protection of minors "parents have come to rely on national regulators and wish to continue to do so" even in the changing media environment (Livingstone 2002: 250). Also, relying solely on parents "to implement a consistent, effective regulation within the home is problematic", because not all parents will be having the time and energy to do this and also because there is currently a generation gap in Internet skills (Livingstone and Bober 2006: 110).

To bypass statutory regulation, industry self-regulation has also been explored as an option. The main advantage of self-regulation on the Internet in the view of Price and Verhulst is flexibility. As the authors emphasise, "self-regulation rarely

exists without some relationship between the industry and the state" (Price and Verhulst 2005: 3). This is why it is not surprising that both EU-level self-regulatory agreements related to protection of minors and new media (Web 2.0; mobile Internet) are initiated by the European Commission (the European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children 2007 and the Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU 2009). However, it would require a very pervasive approach to rely entirely on industry self-regulation, since in the Internet there is not only one industry involved in the value chain (access providers, service providers, content providers, marketing agencies, etc.). Analysts also warn over the transparency of industry standards (Byron 2008: 68). Furthermore, as Amy Jordan emphasised in a reference to the US Child Online Privacy Protection Act, it is very easy for young users to circumvent self-regulatory mechanisms such as age restrictions by "just entering a different age", and it is also very "convenient" for industry to "not bother" about this (Interview Jordan 27.06.2009).

These practical obstacles to regulate the Internet via parental control and industry self-regulation indicate the need for another policy alternative. Analyst Tanya Byron makes an analogy between children on the Internet and children in public swimming pools - even with all regulation and safety tools in place, we still teach children how to swim (Byron 2008: 107). This leads to the policy alternative of educating and raising awareness for safe Internet usage in order to improve Internet literacy.

The European Commission has also chosen to rely on this option. However, for one big supra-national institution, running awareness campaigns for 27 national audiences might be difficult since the cultural specifics might differ. So this activity is being outsourced on a national level through the structure of "national nodes" or Safe

Internet centres. The role of the Commission is first and foremost in funding the nodes and the pan-European network called InSafe. Through the Safer Internet Programme, a funding mechanism dating from 1999, the European Commission co-finances 50%–75% of the costs for awareness raising activities. This funding policy can also be interpreted as a type of participatory governance, since the organizations forming the consortia and the leading co-ordinators can be from any background – public agencies on both central and local level, NGOs, citizen organizations, industry associations, even for-profit companies. Such a pervasive scheme for literacy raising activities is considered a positive approach by experts (e.g. Livingstone et al 2005: 28; Livingstone and Hargrave 2006: 12; Salomon 2009: 208), because it contributes to the balancing between protection of minors and respecting children's rights.

2.3. Media literacy – in and out of formal education

Livingstone emphasises that the way media literacy is defined influences "the framing" of the policy initiatives (Livingstone 2004: 3). She sees an expansion of the concept of traditional literacy from reading and writing to understanding audiovisual messages (since the emergence of television) to the newest form of literacy understood as "computer literacy" or "Internet literacy". Livingstone offers a general, skill-based definition of media literacy as "the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms" (Livingstone 2004: 3). The arising policy implication of such a skill-based understanding of media literacy would be introducing media education.

The aim of media literacy campaigns and media education is to "empower" users – adults or children – through the provision of information. Eve Salomon sees

consumer empowerment as "a substitute for regulation" and perceives this approach as preferred on the Internet, where you can hardly regulate anyway (Informal Interview Salomon 09.07.2009). The academic discourse focuses a lot on the ideal of empowerment through information. Buckingham sees specifically the empowerment of children through technology as almost equivalent of "children's liberation" from adult control (2002: 78). Conversely, Livingstone et al identify empowering as a possible strategy in parental control, but they still classify it as a "positive" approach, while certain restrictive measures are "negative" (2005: 27). Price and Verhulst view the process of information provision as aiming to shift the "self" in self-regulation, so that certain (content) regulation functions are "increasingly located in individual users" rather than in industry (Price and Verhulst 2005: 129).

Most authors emphasise that media literacy campaigns need a broader target audience including not only children, but also parents and even teachers (Livingstone and Bober 2006: 97; Salomon 2009: 207). While the adult audience probably can be most effectively reached through mass media, the information provision for young children and teenagers can in theory be accomplished most effectively through organized education – either formal or informal.

So the question is where the information provision of safe Internet tips fall – in formal or in informal education? According to researcher Niina Uusitalo, with the national policies and approaches to education, governments aim to use education as a way of strengthening the economic productivity of citizens (Uusitalo 2009: 24) and this is why policies to improve levels of literacy usually fall in the domain of formal education. Some experts see the educational policies aimed at cultivating certain skills as not only a right, but also a "duty" of governments (Galston 2002: 211).

Leaning explains that when it comes to a skill-based understanding of media literacy, media education programmes usually arise in response to technological developments and that they are "consciously and purposively developed to deal with specific perceived threats" (Leaning 2009: 6). The idea of literacy as an answer to "threats" clearly places the awareness raising activities for safe Internet use for children in the broader domain of media literacy. However, the principles of safe usage are not the primary ones taught in the educational system because they are not essentially skills (such as working with computer software, text typing and editing, Internet navigation, even web design). So unlike other forms of literacy (i.e. basic reading and writing), some aspects of media literacy are not necessarily covered by formal education, and thus – left in the domain of informal education.

Leaning's classification of the patterns of media literacy programmes (see Leaning 2009: 7-8) shows that most literacy raising activities are related to some sort of institutional engagement or include an active governmental policy. Also according to communication campaigns researcher Hornik, awareness raising needs support from the relevant institutional system (Hornik 2002: 45). Similarly, Livingstone insists that Internet literacy "requires institutional supports" (Livingstone 2008: 114), but warns that "public policy resources are generally devoted more to enabling basic access and understanding than to critical evaluation or user-generated content creation" (Livingstone 2008: 111). Also, with an exclusively skill-centred concept of Internet literacy, it is very possible that aspects such as safe Internet use for children are not only left out of formal education, but perhaps also out of "institutional support" in general.

2.4. Awareness campaigns as a policy tool

Sonia Livingstone considers awareness campaigns to be a "very important policy tool", because they "alert people to new risks and to simple actions they can take" and because they serve as an "important reminder to be careful" (Interview Livingstone 21.07.2009). Regulator Monica Ariño sees a positive value in Internet literacy awareness campaigns, but she insists that such a policy measure is not sustainable on its own (Interview Ariño 21.07.2009). Prof. Monroe Price is much more critical about the role of awareness campaigns as a policy tool. He sees those activities as just "box-ticking". He acknowledges that they do have some effect, but are essentially aiming "to give a sense that we are doing something" (Interview Price 13.07.2009).

Livingstone acknowledges that awareness campaigns are a very expensive way to reach the population (Interview Livingstone 21.07.2009). She believes that if they generate too much fear, they can be "counterproductive" and if they become repetitive, "everyone ignores them" (*ibid*). Livingstone also emphasises the biggest problem of such literacy raising activities – "people can be aware but never change their behaviour" (*ibid*), or what information campaigns researcher Robert Hornik labels as "the knowledge-behaviour gap" (Hornik 1989: 113). Similarly, Amy Jordan stresses the aim of awareness campaigns and social marketing – a behavioural change. According to her, the "best campaign is the evaluated campaign" (Interview Jordan 27.06.2009).

This points to the first significant challenge for policy-makers if they implement Internet literacy campaigns – how to evaluate them and hence, how to justify them. Tracking behavioural change is the only way to effectively measure their success; however, this is a long, expensive and hard to conduct study and most

national campaign coordinators can not afford it. On a European level, the Eurobarometer surveys could potentially do this measurement. A first round already exists: a qualitative study of children's use of technology and perception of risks related to the Internet published in 2007. A potential second study will show if there is a different level of awareness. The challenge will be to isolate the campaigns funded by the EC Safer Internet Programme as a factor in order to measure their contribution.

For the time-being, however, behavioural change and the role of the awareness campaigns for safe Internet use can not be measured, so the success of the campaigns can not be undoubtedly evaluated. The practice within the pan-European InSafe network of national Safe Internet nodes is to exchange experience and learn from other campaigns for safe Internet use in the member states. However, this might be a limiting approach. Both Livingstone and Jordan emphasise in the opinion interviews a strong need for "learning across domains" and draw expertise and evaluated successful strategies from other types of awareness campaigns. Both of them see the health campaigns as a very good source to draw experience from. This is why it makes sense to construct a set of promising communication strategies for awareness raising campaigns.

Luckily, there is an abundance of academic research on social marketing and consciousness-raising campaigns, especially in the US. The focus has been predominantly on health communication campaigns on specific issues ranging from anti-drugs or smoking to safe sex (Hornik 1989; Backer et al 1992; Hornik and Yanovitzky 2003).

Backer et al (1992) construct a comprehensive list of 27 strategies, generalised from interviews with practitioners. From those points, 10 are directly relevant to any communication campaign aiming at behavioural change and they will be utilised in

Chapter 4 as a measure of the quality of the communication strategies of the awareness campaigns. According to Baker et al, effective campaigns:

1. utilise multiple media for distribution of messages but also for increasing visibility;
2. combine mass media with community, small group and individual activities;
3. segment the audience of the campaign;
4. direct messages to groups linked with the target audience (e.g. peers, parents);
5. segment rather by psychographic variables, not by demographics (e.g. at-risk groups);
6. use educational messages in an entertainment format;
7. if fear is created, mechanisms to reduce anxiety should be included;
8. are "coordinated with direct service delivery components (e.g. hotline numbers for information or counselling)";
9. involve in design and operation key figures from government bodies;
10. the role of government agencies in campaigns "is mainly to provide funding".

(Backer et al 1992: 30-31)

Those points are increasing the potential of the campaign to yield the desired effect (behavioural change). They reflect only one of the conditions for effectiveness – the campaign design and operation (content and dissemination). The next chapter will discuss how the theoretically grounded conditions for more successful awareness campaigns translate into qualitative measures of the input of the three campaigns to be examined in Chapter 4. The focus will be on the three input factors (conditions) for the policy tool awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children: communication strategies, content comprehensiveness and institutional support.

Chapter 3. From theory to measurement of input and performance

The analysis of the three input factors (communication strategies, content and institutional support) will help build predictions about the performance of the three cases examined in Chapter 4. Subsequently, an analysis of the actual performance will test those predictions.

Communication strategies

The potential for effectiveness of the campaigns can be measured through the quality of their communication strategies. This can be done by translating the principles for effective communication based on Backer et al (1992) into dichotomous conditions and thus forming a checklist.

The first two of the principles (see p. 20) reflect dissemination strategies: use of multiple media and interpersonal communication such as workshops, events, presentations. The last two principles reflect the participation of public agencies. The "involvement" category is vaguer and might refer to moral support or membership in advisory boards, while the other category is more tangible – funding. These categories will be examined more thoroughly bellow.

Three principles are segmentation-related – target audience segmentation, messages to related groups and at-risk segmentation. The awareness campaigns for safe Internet use primarily target young people, so segmentation means dividing this audience (e.g. young children, teenagers). The guideline to communicate messages to related groups also refers to segmentation, since it expands the audience (e.g. parents, teachers). The at-risk segmentation is particularly important, since the target audience of children and teenagers is not homogeneous. Tailoring messages specific to children

who are more "at-risk" is more promising and would yield more effect, believe experts Amy Jordan and Sonia Livingstone (Interview Jordan 27.06.2009; Interview Livingstone 21.07.2009).

Two of the principles relate to content presentation – putting educational messages in entertaining format and communicating fear reduction messages. The issue of safe Internet use for children is a topic that might create fear – especially in parents who might become over-protective and too restrictive. This is why according to experts (Interview Jordan 27.06.2009 and Interview Livingstone 21.07.2009) it makes sense for the awareness campaign to also focus on the benefits in order not to hamper children's positive use of new technology.

The "direct service delivery component" is listed by Backer et al (1992) as another principle for more effective communication (e.g. a reporting or advising function). In the case of the awareness campaigns for safe Internet use there is a related reporting function – a hotline for reporting illegal and harmful content online, again funded under the Safer Internet Programme. Monica Ariño sees the role of hotlines as very important both because this is effectively outsourcing some monitoring functions to the audience, but also because hotlines give the people a sense that someone is there (Interview Ariño 21.07.2009). Expert Sonia Livingstone stresses that the condition for hotlines to work is a more active civil society or rather "a complaining society" (Interview Livingstone 21.07.2009). For this reason, the number of complaints can be interpreted as an indicators of social awareness.

Content comprehensiveness

The comprehensiveness of the content of the awareness campaign can be measured qualitatively through a checklist, based on the three online risk categories ("content", "contact", "conduct"), identified by the European Commission (Safer

Social Networking Principles 2009; see p.12). They can be sub-classified in more specific threats which are expanded in the expert opinion interviews (Ariño, Jordan, Livingstone, Price) and in the academic literature (Buckingham 2002; Pavlik 2008).

Content-related risks:

1. access to illegal content (child abuse images, content inciting to violence, in some jurisdictions glorification of genocide, etc.);
2. access to harmful content (pornography, violence, other);
3. ability to recognize trustful content.

Contact-related risks:

1. grooming (paedophiles trying to meet children offline);
2. cyber-bullying;
3. aggressive Internet marketing directed to children.

Conduct-related risks:

1. protection of personal information;
2. uploading and downloading;
3. netiquette (good manners in cyberspace);
4. Internet addiction (excessive use at the cost of real-life social contacts, study time and sleep).

The test whether the awareness campaigns cover all these issues will measure the comprehensiveness of their educational content.

An important factor for the effectiveness of the content is age-appropriateness. Expert Amy Jordan stressed that it is crucial for the educational messages to meet the cognitive development of the target audience and there is a huge difference in the way the same thing should be effectively communicated to young children and to teenagers (Interview Jordan 27.06.2009). According to her, messages

to young children need to be communicated in a very direct, literal sense, while teenagers respond better to more abstract wordings and dislike didactic messages. This is why the quality of the content will partially be tested through the presence or absence of a difference between the messages directed to young children and teenagers.

The content of the awareness websites in terms of quality, comprehensiveness and appropriate format can be linked to one very interesting indicator of performance – average time spent on the website in one visit. Hence, the prediction which should be the most successful campaign based on the input factor content will be tested through this indicator.

Institutional support

The evaluation process of the project proposals for the Safer Internet Programme acknowledges that the institutional support is a very important input factor, stating that awareness coordinators need "strong support of national authorities" and "a clear mandate to educate the public" (European Commission 2009: 6). The concept of institutional support, recognized by Livingstone (2008: 111) as crucial for the success of awareness campaigns can be broken down into three aspects: participation from public agencies, involvement of public bodies and public co-funding.

The specifics of the policy tool awareness campaigns funded under the EC Safer Internet Programme imply that "participation" refers to participation in the consortium – either as a coordinator or as a partner. Although it is the project coordinator who is engaged in the reporting and accounting to the European Commission, all consortium partners need to be specified in the project proposal and

all of their responsibilities listed. They have to sign the project proposal as well and are held accountable for the implementation.

The "involvement" and "funding" categories link back to the last two of the principles based on Backer et al (1992). Specifically in the case of the awareness campaigns funded under the Safer Internet Programme, "involvement" can be understood as membership in an advisory board. The awareness nodes funded under the EC Safer Internet Programme are recommended to have such boards consisting of relevant stakeholders – from public bodies through industry and civil society organizations. The membership of public bodies in the advisory boards is a sign of moral institutional support and is perceived by the interviewed project coordinators as increasing the legitimacy of the campaign. Hence, the number of public agencies members of the advisory boards of the three national awareness campaigns can serve as a measure for institutional support in terms of involvement.

The third indicator of institutional support is additional public funding. The EC policy is to not fund 100% of the cost of awareness raising projects. The amount of EU funding is somewhat dependent on the additional funding the project coordinators can rely on. Based on this the coordinators construct their proposals with the specific tasks they will carry out in the project time frame, as one of the interviewed coordinators unofficially admitted, so it is the security of the additional funding that allows more ambitious projects.

Lastly, this qualitative assessment of the input of the three awareness campaigns will be measured against a quantitative assessment of the actual performance. The performance (or "success") is measured in six points:

1. average daily visits on the awareness websites (reflecting popularity);
2. average time on site (reflecting content of the website);

3. percentage of new visits (reflecting communication effectiveness);
4. sites linking in (reflecting the online popularization strategy);
5. citizens' reports on the reporting mechanisms the awareness campaigns are trying to popularise (reflecting to a certain degree a level of awareness and social involvement in the issue of protection of minors in Internet);
6. most importantly: percentage of schools in the country covered by the campaign (reflecting the outreach in the formal education and in some respect the institutional support).

As it was specified in the beginning of this chapter, the next chapter will present the analysis of the input factors, the predictions of performance based on them and the actual performance based on those six indicators.

Chapter 4. Awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children: a comparative analysis

This chapter presents the research on the awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children in Bulgaria, Slovenia and the UK. The research question that needs to be answered is which input factors are associated with a better performance.

4.1. Input factors

4.1.1. Communication strategies

The communication strategies are assessed through the checklist in Table 1, based on the ten principles for effective communication campaigns. The information was gathered through the annual reports and directly from the project coordinators through interviews.

As the first two columns show, all three campaigns seem to follow the dissemination strategies proposed by Backer et al (1992): multiple media use and interpersonal communication. In the interviews, all respondents emphasized the importance of media coverage both as a means to increase visibility and to convey the campaign messages. The coordinators also use the number of publications and broadcasts as one of their measures for success of the campaigns. This is an important indicator, but it is questionable whether it reflects the success of the campaign *per se*, or the success of the coordinating organizations in getting media attention. The media outreach might give a vague idea of how much of the adult population has been allegedly reached. However, it gives insufficient information as to how many young children and teenagers were actually reached.

Table 1. Checklist principles of effective communication based on Backer et al 1992											
National awareness campaign	multiple media use (online, TV, print, etc.)	workshops/ events/ presentations/ trainings	target audience sedmentation	messages to related groups	at-risk segmentation	educational messages in games	fear reduction messages	hotline/ reporting/ counceling	government bodies involvement	public funding	
Bulgaria	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**NO**	**YES**	**NO**	**YES**	**YES**	**NO**	**7 out of 10**
Slovenia	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**NO**	**YES**	**NO**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**8 out of 10**
United Kingdom	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**	**10 out of 10**

Column 2 indicates that all three campaigns use interpersonal communication via events, presentations and workshops; however, the campaigns implement different strategies. Within the Bulgarian and the Slovenian campaigns, the vast majority of such activities were conducted directly by the consortium partners. The Bulgarian project coordinator explained that they are also training educators for school modules on safe Internet use. The British campaign was run by a single organization by the time the research was conducted[2]. In order to cover as much as possible from the population of more than 60 million, an outsourcing approach to the workshops and presentations (training the trainers) was perceived as more efficient.

All three campaigns segment their young target audience (column 3). The Bulgarian and the Slovenian campaigns divide it in young children and teenagers, while the British campaign goes further and segments in three smaller groups, defined by the key stages in the British educational system. It is not surprising that all three campaigns segment their target audiences, since this is a requirement in the proposals for funding under the EC Safer Internet Programme. All campaigns communicate awareness messages also to the related groups of parents and teachers (column 4); however, only the British campaign does "at-risk" segmentation (column 5). The coordinating organization as a law-enforcement agency is involved also in intelligence and thus, they identify "at-risk" groups – a process too hard and expensive for another type of organization. The respondent pointed out one at-risk group the campaign has been trying to target specifically – children with special educational needs (Interview Steele 20.07.2009).

All the campaigns try to put their messages to the younger target audience in an entertaining format – with simple games for the younger children and with

[2] Project Empower, ran solely by the CEOP, is already closed. From July 2009 the new project is implemented by a consortium – CEOP as coordinator, the Internet Watch Foundation (an industry self-regulatory body) and the NGO National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

interactive tests for the teenagers. This is one of the approaches recommended by the pan-European network InSafe as a best-practice example (Interview Šterk/Vehovar 15.06.2009). While the tests for teenagers seem quite similar, the games for young children differ in design, characters, and storyline. This means that every single awareness node develops own educational game – potentially not the most efficient approach since it might cost way less to translate and adapt games developed within other awareness campaigns.

Column 7 shows that both the Bulgarian and the Slovenian campaign websites do not have fear reduction messages (sections with benefits). This does not mean that in presentations, workshops and trainings such messages are not disseminated. One of the project coordinators explained that they do not see the need to emphasise the benefits because young users are very well aware of them (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009). The project coordinator of the British campaign agrees that teenage users are aware of the benefits, but insists that younger children should receive messages to encourage their positive use of the Internet (Interview Steele 20.07.2009).

All three campaigns for safe Internet use for children also have as a direct service delivery component a reporting function (hotline or web form) for citizens' reports for illegal and harmful content on the Internet. The coordinator of the Bulgarian awareness campaign even emphasized that the efforts of the awareness campaign in the country are mainly to direct the attention to the hotline in order to make more people report (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009).

Finally, the Slovenian and the British campaigns receive both "involvement" and "funding". The Bulgarian campaign does involve governmental bodies, but has

no co-funding. This is what the project coordinator called "moral support" (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009).

From the conditions for effective communication in Table 1, it could be expected that the Bulgarian and Slovenian campaigns should be quite similar in their levels of performance. The only difference between them in the grid is the public funding. This means that if there is a difference between their performance it can potentially be explained by the presence or absence of public funding for the campaigns. The British campaign's communication strategy scores a 10 out of 10 in the checklist based on Backer et al (1992), hence it is expected that the British campaign has a better performance than the other two.

4.1.2. Content of the awareness campaigns

The comprehensiveness of the content of the websites is measured with the grid in Table 2 which includes the specific risks and the three main topics related to Internet literacy: content-, contact- and conduct-related risks (see p.23).

Since all the campaigns communicate messages to different audiences (Bulgaria and Slovenia – four; the UK – five), it was expected to see different content and different emphasis for each group. The focus of analysis of the comprehensiveness of the content has been solely the tips sections of the websites[3].

Both the Bulgarian and the Slovenian campaigns have on their awareness websites a "tips" or "top 10 safety principles" section for each target audience. The lists are comprehensive although they are condensed in a short and user-friendly format. The British campaign divides the tips not only for each target audience, but

[3] The British and Bulgarian tips sections were analysed in the original language, while for the Slovenian campaign the English language version of the website was mainly used.

also in topics (e.g. chatting, file sharing, social networking), and each topic highlights two to three most important safety tips.

Table 2. Content of awareness campaigns

National awareness campaign WEBSITE sections	Target audience	Content			Contact			Conduct				Difference between messages to young children and teenagers	Difference between messages to parents and teachers/ trainers	Most important topic in national awareness campaign (highlighted in practitioners' interviews)
		Illegal	Harmful	Trust	Grooming	Cyber-bullying	Marketing	Personal data	Uploading Downloading	Netiquette	Addiction			
Tips														
Bulgaria	Young children	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	**Cyber-bullying;**
	Teenagers	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO			
	Parents	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES			**Personal data**
	Teachers	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO			
Slovenia	Young children	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	**Internet addiction;**
	Teenagers	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO			
	Parents	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO			**Personal data**
	Teachers													
United Kingdom	Children 5-7	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	**Grooming;**
	Children 8-10	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO			
	Teens 11-16	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO			
	Parents	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES			
	Teacher/Trainers	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES			**Personal data**

In five out of nine topics (personal data, grooming, illegal content, harmful content, downloading), the three campaigns do not show drastic differences. The most emphasised topic is personal data and privacy protection. Both the Bulgarian and the Slovenian campaign coordinators stressed that all the risks in cyberspace are potential and it is divulging personal information or not being cautious about your privacy that brings the risks closer (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009; Interview Šterk/Vehovar 15.06.2009).

Another risk that also receives a lot of attention in the content of the campaigns is grooming. This issue is apparently the most worrying for all stakeholders, especially parents and law enforcement. Unlike other topics related to safe Internet use for children (e.g. marketing; trustful content), grooming is the risk that poses a very tangible danger for incautious children. Furthermore, paedophilia is considered a serious crime in virtually all jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies have are highly concerned with child abuse prevention.

The issue with uploading and downloading files receives a lot of attention as well. This topic is not strictly related to young Internet users but apparently it is regarded as a crucial component of Internet literacy. It is a very broad issue encompassing other risks – from content and privacy to virus, spyware, phishing etc. This is one of the topics in safe Internet use campaigns that is most related to the traditional skill-based understanding of literacy. It is also most commonly present in IT classes in schools, as the campaign coordinators acknowledged.

Interestingly, the three campaigns are reluctant to communicate awareness messages related to "illegal" content. When they speak about content, it is usually termed "harmful" or "upsetting". The British campaign coordinator explained that they do not want to tell children about child abuse images (Interview Steele

20.07.2009). Still, this is the only campaign that actually mentions the term "illegal" in communications targeting teenage audiences.

Also worth noting is how one topic prioritised by one of the campaigns receives only half of the attention in the other two campaigns. The Slovenian campaign communicates to all audiences the conduct-related issue of netiquette, or how children behave online. As the respondent acknowledged, they realise problems such as cyber-bullying come from other children, and it makes more sense to explain to potential bullies that they are not anonymous than to teach the victims how to react (Interview Šterk/Vehovar 15.06.2009). Perhaps this emphasis on netiquette explains why the Slovenian "tips" section does not explicitly deal with bullying. Such an approach indicates that the campaign coordinators understand the role of children online not so much as passive, powerless and defenceless victims, but rather as active users who can shape their online world.

The grid in Table 2 shows that only in the Slovenian campaign there is no difference in the wording of the tips directed to young children and teenagers (both in the English translation and in the original Slovenian language). This means that the safety messages to one of the target groups do not meet the groups' cognitive development. Hence, the quality of the content is potentially undermined by an age-inappropriate form.

The last column in Table 2 shows the most important awareness topics for the three national campaigns, as pointed out in the interviews with coordinators. All three campaigns list protection of personal information as a second priority, perhaps surprisingly since it is actually the topic covered most comprehensively in their tips sections. As for the main priorities, the coordinators admit they are based on organization's remit (British campaign), or on consultations with stakeholders

(Bulgarian and Slovenian campaigns). This type of prioritising is not grounded in more solid research of the actual behaviour and experiences of young users. However, it follows the main guidelines specified in the individual evaluation report for the funding proposals for the Safer Internet Programme (European Commission IAR 2009: 4). All three coordinators admit they develop their content as much in line with EC guidelines as possible – involving all relevant stakeholders and especially children; utilizing the resources of the pan-European network InSafe; and following closely the campaigns in other Member States.

In conclusion, the content of the three awareness campaigns is not the same, but the project coordinators emphasise that the distinctions reflect country context specifics. Overall, the similarities tend to be more important than the distinctions. As indicated in Chapter 3, the quality of the content of the awareness websites will be linked to the average time on site indicator. Based on the analysis, it can be predicted that the British campaign might have a higher average time on site due to the age- and topic-based segmentation of the tips and also to the presentation of fear reduction messages.

4.1.3 Institutional support

The notion "institutional support" was broken down in Chapter 3 in three sub-categories: participation, involvement and funding. Table 3 presents the measures of those three categories. The project consortia of all three national campaigns are different and this was one of the case selection criteria. The British campaign has the highest level of institutional support according to the indicator "participation", since it is run by a public agency. The Slovenian case has a strong support by public agencies

because a project partner is a public body. Lastly, the Bulgarian awareness campaign has no institutional support in terms of participation of public agencies.

Table 3. Input factors: constoria and funding

	PARTICIPATION			INVOLVEMENT	FUNDING				
National awareness campaign	Project implemented in consortium	Public agency coordinator	Public agency consortium partner	Number of public agencies in Advisory board: all (central)	EC Safer Internet Programme fudning (percentage)	Additional public funding (percentage)	Overall cost of project* (Euro)	Overall project cost per citizen (Euro)	Overall project cost per Internet user (Euro)
Bulgaria	**YES**	**NO**	**NO**	**6 (5)**	**75**	**1**	**1 470 000**	**0.065**	**0.198**
Slovenia	**YES**	**NO**	**YES**	**7 (7)**	**75**	**25**	**600 000**	**0.299**	**0.461**
United Kingdom	**NO**	**YES**	--	**6 (1)**	**50**	**50**	**1 920 000**	**0.031**	**0.044**
source	Official project desrciption, Safer Internet Programme website; new UK running from July 2009 already in consortium	Official project desrciption, Safer Internet Programme website	Official project desrciption, Safer Internet Programme website	annual reports	Official project desrciption, Safer Internet Programme website	Obtained directly from project coordinators during interviews	Official project desrciption, SIP website; *BG and SI projects still running; UK project closed, new one running from July 2009	generated by author based on data from SIP website and Internet World Stats	generated by author based on data from SIP website and Internet World Stats

The level of involvement is measured in Table 3 by advisory board membership. These boards engage in approving educational content, broad strategic directions of the campaign activities and partnerships with industry actors, as it was specified by the Bulgarian and Slovenian coordinators. The British campaign has a slightly different advisory board called "educational", which gives a "quality assurance" for all the educational materials coming out of the campaign (Interview Steele 20.07.2009).

The British campaign has the least number of public agencies in its Education Advisory Board and just one of them is on central level. The quantitatively limited public agency involvement based on this indicator could be due to the strictly educational focus of the advisory board. Furthermore, involving the decentralized levels of governance in the process seems perfectly logical for a large country like the UK. Conversely, the Slovenian campaign involves in the advisory board solely central state level agencies. Again, due to the population size this might make sense – in a country of 2 million residents there might be less of a regional difference expected. Among the three cases, it scores highest on this indicator by involving seven public agencies in the advisory board. The Bulgarian campaign also has a high involvement of public agencies in the Advisory board – five on central and one on local level (the capital's municipality).

Both the British and Slovenian campaigns are co-funded with public money. The British project (July 2007 – June 2009) was co-funded by the project coordinator Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre, which is funded by the Serious Organized Crime Agency, which is ultimately funded by the Home Office. The Slovenian campaign (September 2008 – August 2010) is co-funded by one of the project partners – the public body ARNES, and by the Ministry of Higher Education.

The Bulgarian project (June 2008 – May 2010) basically does not have public co-funding. Within the first proposal for the Safer Internet Programme, the State Agency for Information Technology and Communications issued a letter of support where it promised co-funding: "specific tasks and specific values" (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009). However, there was "a change in administration and a change of priorities" (*ibid*) and this engagement was never fulfilled. As the respondent admitted, since the project started it has received in sum around €5000 financial support by public agencies, which accounts for less than 1 % of the overall project cost. As a consequence to the lack of public financing, the coordinating organization had to spend a lot of human capital in raising additional funding, which was ultimately attracted through a grant by the international charity OAK Foundation.

The comparison of the overall project cost of the three national campaigns will be per capita since the three countries are quite different in population size[4]. However, the countries also differ in level of Internet penetration[5], so the more effective comparison of funding is done per Internet user. In absolute terms the most generously funded campaign – the British one, turns out to be the least funded when calculated per Internet user. The Bulgarian campaign is almost five times better funded, and the Slovenian campaign is more than ten times better funded than the British one.

It could be speculated what the expected effect of higher or lower per-user funding is. In the implementation process of the awareness campaigns there are certain elements of economy of scope (e.g. the creative and strategic development, the development of the website). In this sense, higher funding in absolute terms could be expected to lead to better content of the awareness campaign. However, other

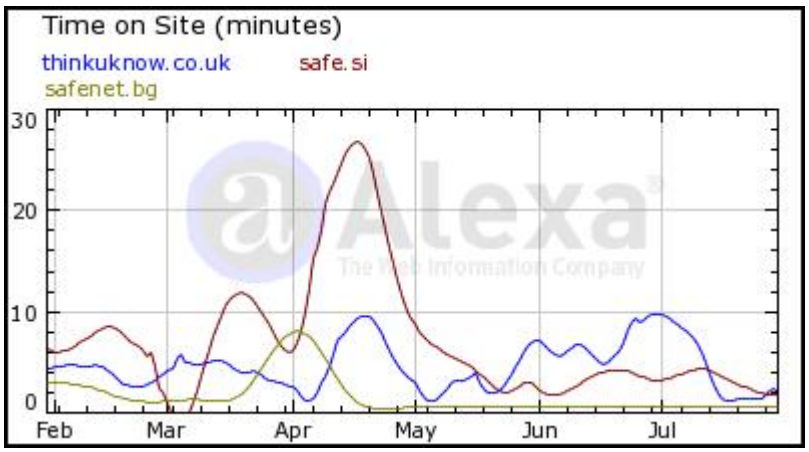
[4] Bulgaria 7,262,675; Slovenia 2,007,711; United Kingdom 60,943,912 (Internet World Stats).
[5] Bulgaria 32,6%; Slovenia 64,8%; United Kingdom 71,8% (Internet World Stats).

elements such as production and dissemination of printed materials and the organization of interpersonal communication activities (presentations, workshops), is obviously depended on the scope and a higher per capita funding potentially means better dissemination.

4.2. Performance

4.2.1 Quantitative performance of awareness websites

Graph 1 presents the dynamics of the average time on site indicator for six months and shows that at least at one point each of the three campaigns was doing "best". Potentially this can be explained by specific activities the campaign organizers have launched at specific moments or by more energetic uploading of new material at one point and fewer updates in the main time.



Graph 1: Time on Site; Source: Alexa

The British website has the most stable time on site dynamics and also the highest average time on site based on the data provided by the project coordinators (see Table 4). This was predicted in the above analysis of the input, because the British campaign was tailoring the safety messages (tips) both for target audiences *and* based on specific topics, and besides was presenting benefits sections. This does

not necessarily mean that more content leads to more time on site, since the amount of content is not being measured here. The explanation could be more consistent efforts on part of the British awareness campaign coordinators to update the content and to present it in a better manner, so that visitors stay longer on the site, read more and presumably get more "aware" on Internet safety issues.

Table 4. Performance - awareness website visits, public reports

National campaign website	6 month average daily visits	average daily visits per Internet user	6 month average time in site (minutes)	6 month new visits (percentage)	sites linking in	yearly reports 2008	yearly reports per Internet user	approximate number of Internet users
Bulgaria	**304**	**0.00013**	**01:39**	**75.25**	**9**	**565**	**0.00023**	**2,368,000**
Slovenia	**202**	**0.00016**	**04:00**	**60.78**	**69**	**624**	**0.00048**	**1,300,000**
United Kingdom	**3892**	**0.00009**	**06:03**	**62.74**	**467**	**2616**	**0.00006**	**43,221,464**
source	coordinators (based on Google Analytics, checked with Statbrain.com)	generated by author (based on coordinators and Internet World Stats)	coordinators (based on Google Analytics)	coordinators (based on Google Analytics)	Alexa Web Information Company	for BG - annual report 2008; for SI - project coordinator; for UK - annual report, percentage only of public reports	generated by author (based on data from annual reports and Internet World Stats)	Internet World Stats (data March 2008, based on ITU statistics)

As Table 4 shows, each of the campaigns scores best on at least one indicator. The Bulgarian campaign is the one that attracts most new visitors as a percentage of the overall visits. On the one hand, this can mean that in past periods the campaign has not been very successful in reaching the audience, but on the other hand this is a solidly positive indicator showing that more and more "new" people get acquainted with the campaign website and presumably get the awareness messages.

In a way these new visits on the Bulgarian campaign website might be surprising, since the campaign had the least promising communication strategies based on the checklist in Table 1 and since it also has the fewest number of other websites linking in (Table 4). The Bulgarian respondent emphasised that for them it is more important to get more sites linking in the website of the hotline rather than the awareness website, in order to get people used to reporting illegal or harmful content (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009).

The first blue column presents the indicator average daily visits per user, which can be directly compared across the cases. From the analysis of the input factors, most notably communication strategies and content, the expectation was that the British campaign will be performing better than the other two. In reality it is the other way around according to this indicator – although the British awareness website presents the content in the best way and although the campaign overall has the soundest communication strategy (10 out of 10 in Table 1) – still, each day just 9 of 10 000 Internet users in the UK actually visit the campaign website.

In comparison, the Slovenian campaign has almost two times more per user visits, with 16 of 10 000. Even the Bulgarian campaign, although it scores low on other indicators, has more per user visits than the British one. Exactly the same result is manifested when comparing average yearly reports per user (second blue column)

and the difference this time is even more striking – with the Slovenian campaign yielding eight times more, and the Bulgarian almost four times more per user reports than the British one.

However, what needs to be clarified here is that the Bulgarian and the Slovenian awareness nodes coordinate also the hotline, so the measurement here is yearly reports on hotline. The British awareness campaign coordinator CEOP has its own reporting function, which is not the same as the hotline in the UK. In the last published annual report, the data for reports received in CEOP was aggregated reports coming also from intelligence and from monitoring by child welfare charities. Only one group of the reports (with 44 % the largest one) were reports from the public and only this group is taken for the comparison of per user reports in Table 4. Hence, the result for average yearly reports per Internet user might not fully reflect the state of awareness and civic activity in reporting illegal and harmful content in the UK, because more people might use the hotline (run by another organization). Since already the awareness campaign and the hotline coordinators have formed a consortium, the data would probably be aggregated in the next annual report of the UK Safer Internet centre and the comparison could be more direct.

Still, the results of the comparison of the per Internet user performance indicators (blue columns) show that potentially the input factors communication strategies and content might be less significant: the British campaign, which had a notable advantage in both of them, actually scores lower on performance.

4.2.2 Outreach: the awareness messages in schools

This ultimate performance indicator should add the last piece in assessing the performance of the three campaigns – outreach in the formal educational system. During the research period it was not possible to get access to official data from educational institutions in the three countries, hence the analysis relied on the information provided by the project coordinators in the practitioners' interviews.

The Slovenian campaign coordinator claimed a 100 % school coverage because their teacher guidebooks are distributed in five copies in all schools in the country (about 500 schools), as well as educational brochures for children and parents. For the dissemination, utilized were the formal institutional channels of the educational system (Interview Šterk/Vehovar 15.06.2009). Furthermore, the project partner – a public body responsible for connecting schools and libraries to the Internet, is well-known by teachers and school-administrators. Because of the campaign activity, a new module of Safe Internet use was introduced in teacher trainings (Interview Šterk/Vehovar 15.06.2009). Currently, the awareness centre in the country is also pushing for inserting Internet safety in the curriculum.

The British campaign coordinator could not claim the campaign has reached 100 % of the schools, but was very confident that the percentage of the + 20 000 schools covered is high. The reason is that a lot of schools download and run the ready presentations on Internet safety prepared within the campaign. Since the British educational system officially has no Internet literacy classes yet, as acknowledged by the respondent, those sessions are usually ran in Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education classes. Some local educational authorities "take Internet safety very seriously" (Interview Steele 20.07.2009) and have officially introduced such classes in the curricula on local level. Furthermore, the campaign keeps track of the

number of children who have attended presentations by instructors, trained by CEOP (4.500.000 as of August 2009).

The Bulgarian campaign coordinator was not so confident in claiming large coverage of the school network in the country. One of the main dissemination strategies for reaching children and teenagers were posters with safety tips which were supposed to hang in school hallways. The Ministry of Education supported the project and offered their official channels for the dissemination. However, "the chain broke down somewhere on the level of the regional educational authorities" (Interview Apostolov 29.05.2009). The respondent interprets this as lack of coordination and understanding. After this bad experience, the campaign coordinators either contact school administration directly (e.g. parents' leaflets to be distributed on parents' evening), or try to capture the target audience out of the school network.

Similarly to the British project, the Bulgarian one trains Internet safety instructors to run presentation for children in schools. Although the approach is promising, the Bulgarian coordinator admits the coverage so far has been limited. This scheme is ran on municipal level and schools need to volunteer, so by the time of the interview only 12 schools in the capital (the only municipality involved in the advisory board) have been offering their pupils Internet safety modules.

4.3. Success input factors

Although the British campaign offers the most comprehensive and well arranged educational content and although its communication strategies seem to be superior, it does not have high performance on indicators such as website visits per Internet user and yearly reports per Internet user. Still, the British campaign is very

successful in reaching the educational system, although the large scale inevitably poses a great practical challenge.

According to most of the performance indicators – website visits per Internet user, yearly reports per Internet user and dissemination in formal education, it seems clear that the Slovenian campaign is performing best among the three campaigns. Part of the reason for better school network coverage is certainly the smaller scale – it is practically easier to disseminate educational materials in 500 schools than in more than 20 000. However, this can not be the sole explanation for the better performance in the other two indicators.

This can potentially mean that the most important input factor in order to reach the educational system is the institutional support in terms of participation of public bodies in the awareness campaigns – one of the main similarities between the British and the Slovenian campaigns, although the level of participation varies (public agency coordinating the British campaign and public body just being a consortium partner in the Slovenian project). Finally, the high performance of the Slovenian campaign in the per Internet user indicators is possibly a function of the significantly higher per-user funding it receives.

Conclusion

The preliminary hypothesis of the present research was that if a public agency has the leading role in the development and dissemination of an awareness campaign, as compared to another type of organization, the awareness campaign will be more successful. The comparative analysis across three cases – the British, Slovenian and Bulgarian campaigns for safe Internet use – indicated that this does not necessarily hold true. While in some performance indicators the British campaign, run by a public agency, is more successful than the other two campaigns, for most performance indicators the Slovenian campaign, run by a university and supported by a public body, seems to be more successful.

This means that for better performance, a public agency need not have the leading role in the awareness campaign. However, the findings of this paper also show that public agencies do need to play a role by providing stable institutional support – e.g. in legitimizing (through participation as project partners and through involvement in advisory boards) and in facilitating the campaign (through additional public funding).

The least "institutionally supported" campaign – the Bulgarian, although doing relatively well in some performance indicators, is lagging behind the other two cases in the most important indicator of effective dissemination – reaching the school network. This may be due to exogenous conditions. For instance, the significantly lower economic development of Bulgaria in comparison to the UK and Slovenia might be dictating different set of priorities for the public agencies in the country when it comes to Internet usage – e.g. increasing the Internet penetration in the country.

The research on these three particular cases has also shown that institutional support in terms of participation, involvement and funding from public agencies seem to be a more important factor for better performance of an awareness campaign for safe Internet use in comparison to the other input factors (communication strategies and educational content). The comparative analysis also reveals a positive correlation between the amount of per Internet user funding of the campaigns and the "per-user" performance indicators (average daily website visits and average yearly reports per Internet user).

Lastly, the British case suggests that better content of the awareness websites (more comprehensive, targeted, age-appropriate and user-friendly) yields higher average time on site in one visit. More time spent browsing the educational materials increases the likelihood that the awareness messages are perceived and translated into actual behaviour. This is, after all, the ultimate goal of the campaigns for safe Internet use for children.

In the light of those findings, the following recommendations can be made to the European Commission for the upcoming round for funding proposals under the Safer Internet Programme.

1. The Commission should encourage stronger institutional support through public co-funding of the projects and involvement of public agencies in project consortia. The research has shown that institutional support is crucial for the better performance of the campaigns, although it is not necessary that a public agency actually runs the project. The formal project involvement as a consortium partner and especially the public co-funding seem to ensure the institutional support required for the dissemination of the campaigns in the formal education, as the Slovenian case showed. Furthermore, public funding

could easily be justified on the grounds that literacy raising is a social goal and in this respect the awareness campaigns for safe Internet use for children are socially important projects. For this purpose, the Commission should put more effort in communicating to national authorities in member states the importance of Internet literacy and in particular safe Internet use for children.

2. The Commission should require campaign coordinators to track the percentage of schools where they have distributed educational materials and where consortium partners or trained instructors have delivered presentations. So far, the Commission has been encouraging the national awareness nodes to measure the success of awareness campaigns by numbers of media appearances and of produced educational materials. However, they give insufficient information and for that reason, introducing in the funding agreements should be introduced a requirement to also measure and report the number of schools that has been reached – both in absolute terms and as a percentage of all the schools in the country. Potentially, this performance indicator can be linked to an increase of funding for a subsequent round.
3. The Commission should encourage more knowledge spill-over of content presentation and formatting strategies. The British campaign website offers a benefits section and also groups the safety tips not only for the different target audiences but also in topical subsections. This is a feasible approach for other campaigns and it seems to yield higher average time on website in one visit.

One question that remains unanswered is if awareness campaigns are sufficient and if this funding mechanism the best the European Commission can do in regards to protection of minors on the Internet. Before an actual study shows a

positive change in the Internet usage habits nobody can be confident in saying that awareness campaigns are sufficient. All experts stressed in the opinion interviews that literacy raising is necessary. Still, they emphasised it should be a complementary measure for protection of minors on the Internet and not the remedy in itself. The EC is also encouraging self-regulation in this domain; however, such agreements rely too much on the goodwill of the industry.

The Commission does have the power to legislate though, and can choose from other alternatives. In the expert opinion interviews two interesting potential remedies were discussed. According to Prof. Monroe Price, a financial stimuli scheme can be developed for those Internet service providers who put in place special measures for safer Internet for children (Price Interview 13.07.2009). Sonia Livingstone recommended the introduction of co-regulatory oversight on the top 10 websites in each country which the young Internet users mostly visit (Livingstone Interview 21.07.2009). She explained that the main benefit would be the accountability of the process – something often missing from self-regulatory agreements.

Future policy research on protection of minors on the Internet should examine such alternatives. Also beneficial for the better understanding of the policy tool awareness campaigns, would be to expand the scope of the present research. Including more cases in a comparative analysis would make it possible to test whether the current conclusions apply to all awareness raising activities funded under the EC Safer Internet Programme.

List of respondents

Practitioners Interviews:

Georgi Apostolov, ARC Fund: 29 May 2009, Sofia;

Jason Steele, CEOP: 21 July 2009, London.

Tanja Šterk and Vasja Vehovar, University of Ljubljana: 15 June 2009, Ljubljana;

Expert Interviews:

Amy Jordan, Annenberg School of Communications, UPenn: 27 June 2009, Budapest;

Eve Salomon, Internet Watch Foundation: 09 July 2009, Oxford (informal);

Monica Ariño, Ofcom: 21 July 2009, London.

Monroe Price, Annenberg School of Communications, UPenn:13 July 2009, Oxford;

Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics: 21 July 2009, London;

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Questionnaires and transcripts are available upon request to the author.

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