Report on Research and Analysis of Methods and Tools for Online Safety

KA2 Small partnership project: AIwareness

Project number: 2024-3-FI01-KA210-YOU-000265204

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Abstract

This report provides an in-depth overview of the current state of awareness and safety in the online environment, with a particular focus on young people and the professionals who support them. It examines the use of digital tools and innovative methods in youth work as a means to counter social engineering, build the capacity of youth workers, and empower marginalized or underrepresented youth. The report recognizes that in a rapidly evolving digital landscape, young people are both frequent users of technology and increasingly exposed to online risks. Therefore, improving digital resilience and awareness is essential.

This comprehensive and multifaceted document combines desk research drawn from existing literature and theoretical frameworks related to online safety, digital literacy, and the ethical use of AI tools. It also includes field research conducted in three different national contexts— Finland, North Macedonia, and Germany—through surveys, interviews, and collaborative brainstorming sessions with youth workers, educators, and other key stakeholders. These methods were designed to gather practical insights and reflect the real needs and experiences of those working with and for young people.

In addition to presenting the evidence gathered, the report outlines the core concept and motivations behind the *AIwareness* project. It highlights the backgrounds of the project partners, their individual challenges, and the shared goals that brought them together. The findings are used to inform a set of targeted recommendations aimed at improving the quality and relevance of youth work, especially through the use of creative, non-formal, and digital approaches. Particular emphasis is placed on how to raise awareness about the risks of AI misuse and social engineering tactics among youth, especially those with fewer opportunities or limited access to digital education.

The report concludes with a forward-looking roadmap, suggesting areas for future research, program development, and practical implementation in non-formal educational settings. These proposed actions aim to strengthen online safety, promote ethical and informed use of AI technologies, and ensure that young people are not only protected but also empowered to navigate the digital world confidently and critically.

Background and rationale

AI tools are increasingly adopted by people across education, economy, public services and in many segments in society. Young people, often early adopters of digital technologies, are especially vulnerable to manipulation, phishing, data theft, and other deceptive practices that exploit both human psychology and AI-driven systems. Despite the expanding presence of AI in education, social media, and public services, there is a critical gap in awareness and understanding around how these tools can be used to influence behavior, harvest personal data, or bypass privacy protections. This lack of digital preparedness is compounded by the fact that many AI systems operate in ways that are invisible to users, making it difficult to recognize when personal information is at risk. Therefore, there is an urgent need for targeted education that empowers young people and youth workers to identify, question, and safely navigate AI tools and online environments. The "AIwearness" project aims to create a tool kit for building resilience, digital literacy, and critical thinking for addressing social engineering tactics and promoting safe and ethical AI use, especially among youth with fewer opportunities.

As part of the Erasmus+ programme, AIwareness is a small-scale project that addresses the horizontal priority of digital transformation through the development of digital readiness, resilience, and capacity. This project focuses on safe use of AI in particular the areas of social engineering and data theft because of the growing threats and unethical use of AI. The main aim of the project is to strengthen the resilience, preparedness, and digital capacity of young people with fewer opportunities, equipping them to navigate and respond to risks related to social engineering in their everyday lives. Specifically, the project seeks to deepen participants' understanding of how social engineering works and the digital tools commonly used in such attacks, empowering them to better protect themselves.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an integral part of everyday life and it is influencing the experiences and practices of young people who engage with digital tools on a daily basis.Therefore, it is important to stay informed about the development, benefits, limitations, and ethical use of AI particularly in online environments. When integrating AI into both our lives and work it is important to stay safe.

Through this initiative, individuals from diverse backgrounds will gain the skills and knowledge needed to recognize deception and prevent the misuse of their personal data.

Project Objectives and Priorities: The "AIwareness" project addresses threats posed by AI in social engineering and data theft, aiming to improve the quality of youth work across the EU by developing youth workers' skills. The project aligns with the horizontal priority of "Addressing digital transformation through development of digital readiness, resilience and capacity," and also with "Increasing quality, innovation and recognition of youth work" and "Inclusion and diversity in all fields of education, training, youth and sport". Key objectives include improving youth workers' knowledge and tools for AI safety, data protection, social engineering, and digital footprint, developing a systematized methodology for youth workers, and empowering young people to navigate the digital world safely.

A core strength of the *Aiwareness* project lies in the diversity and complementarity of the three partnerships. This section offers an overview of the three organizations, highlighting how their unique missions, experiences, and areas of expertise form a strong foundation for collaborative youth work across borders.

The partners represent a balanced mix of well-established and emerging organizations, ensuring both innovation and stability in project implementation. Their combined efforts address key challenges in social engineering, AI misuse and unethical use and non-formal education. By understanding each partner's background and specific needs, the project creates meaningful synergy that enhances the quality and reach of its activities.

All partners and their participants will take an active role in the project's core activities, including transnational meetings, training courses for youth workers, and youth exchange programs. This inclusive and participatory approach ensures that the project remains responsive to the realities and perspectives of all involved.

Expected Results: The project anticipates raising awareness and enhancing the knowledge of youth workers and young individuals regarding digital environment behaviors, cyber threats, and ethical AI usage. Key results include a research analysis publication, 13 trained youth workers, and 90 engaged young people. The main outcome will be an e-Toolkit with systematized methods, tools, and step-by-step instructions for facilitating workshops, which will be freely available

Participating Organizations:

The applicant organization is **InterLink Initiative** (E10367599 - FI), a non-governmental organization based in Helsinki, Finland. Their main activities focus on addressing societal problems, empowering youth, and fostering collaboration to create a better future, with activities in the field of the application including research and helping young individuals and informing them on the ethical AI tool usage. They are a newly established association without of experience as an applicant in this field.

InterLink Initiative ry is an association that serves as a platform for everyone to participate actively in society, regardless of their background or circumstances. Through a variety of projects and events, the organization creates opportunities that bring people together, foster dialogue, and build connections across different groups in the community. By stimulating interaction in cultural, educational, and social dimensions, the association works to strengthen inclusion, mutual understanding, and active citizenship, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The partner organizations are:

Info Front – Prilep is a youth-focused association and non-governmental organization dedicated to providing young people with information about the Erasmus+ programme.

The organization actively promotes creativity, youth mobility, creative activism, non-formal education, cultural exchange, and effective information sharing.

Our activities span both local and international levels, with a diverse range of past, ongoing, and upcoming projects. Our thematic focus includes European awareness, digitalization and digital tools, human rights, refugee issues, inclusion, self-promotion, gender equality, arts and culture, creative writing, storytelling, environmental awareness, and sports. Additionally, Info Front operates a Youth Center that offers workshops in areas such as career development and language learning. In the field of media, we publish **MYG**, a free youth magazine written by EVS/ESC volunteers.

It is available in both English and Macedonian and can be accessed online at www.issuu.com/infofront and www.infofront.mk. The organization works closely with a team of volunteers and freelancers. Currently, our staff includes 25 volunteers under voluntary agreements and 5 freelancers. We also engage around 50 young learners in non-formal education activities, along with 120 high school students from our associated partner institution, the VET school **SOU "Riste Risteski-Richko."** Over the past 12 years of active participation in Erasmus+ and Youth in Action programmes, we have involved more than 500 local young people in various non-formal educational initiatives, helping them build skills, broaden perspectives, and become active members of society.

Established in 2011, **Info Front – Prilep** also serves as the Macedonian branch of **Loesje International**, an activist organization dedicated to promoting human rights and freedom of speech (www.loesje.org). Since 2012, the organization has been actively involved in the field of volunteering, holding **EVS/ESC accreditation** for sending, coordinating, and hosting projects. As of 2022, Info Front – Prilep holds a **youth field accreditation** valid through 2027.

Although relatively new to small-scale partnerships, the organization brings extensive experience in organizing workshops and working closely with youth and marginalized groups. There is a recognized need to expand its access to **interactive digital tools and innovative methods**, as well as to establish new partnerships that will support the **internationalization** of its work and enhance the impact of future projects.

Tabana NGO e. V. (E10330390 - DE) from Bad Neustadt a. d. Saale, Germany. This is a new NGO focusing on Erasmus+ programs, creativity, youth mobility, and non-formal education. They have 2 years of experience working with human rights and marginalized youngsters at the local level and are currently working on a small-scale partnership on youth motivation through digital tools.

Tabana NGO is formed by enthusiastic young people and trainers, with vast experienceswhen it comes to youth mobility, developing initiatives and youth projects.The staff members have participated in many training courses and youth exchanges in the topics of art and culture, media, digital skills and direct work with youngsters, bullying, human rights, inclusion, anti-discrimination, battle against stereotypes and prejudices. From these projects we gained further knowledge of new non-formal education methods, ways of facilitating, good practices and new partnerships.They are also a partner organization of another KA2 strategic partnership "CodeCivics – Coding Better Communities", project number :2023-2-MK01-KA220-YOU-000184609.

Introduction

Theoretical background and literature review

AI definition and use

AI is a relatively new discipline that is often dated in 1956 in Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, USA (Sheikh, Prins, Schrijvers, 2023). However, the development and theories of AI existed much earlier. Due to the continuous development of AI and the different perspectives and application of AI in many fields, there is no single definition that is generally accepted across various disciplines.

For the purpose of this report we will take the following definition:

"Systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals." (Sheikh, Prins, Schrijvers, 2023, p.20)

The term *"intelligent"* in artificial intelligence (AI) doesn't necessarily imply true intelligence. Rather, it serves as a reminder to approach AI with caution and mindfulness. As Santeri Räisänen outlines in his presentation of three main theoretical approaches (Council of Europe, 2019), it's evident from the seminar report on *Artificial Intelligence and its Impact on Young People* that we must be thoughtful not only in how we use the term AI but also in the contexts in which it is applied.

Research on the impact of AI on youth is still limited. According to data published by United Nations bodies (2019), young people aged 15–24 are the major users of the internet worldwide. Moreover, children are beginning to use the internet and AI-powered digital tools at increasingly younger ages. As AI technologies are becoming an important part of our daily lives, it is crucial that young people are better informed and prepared. More research is needed to fully understand how AI affects their well-being, autonomy, societal participation, and access to rights. AI is playing an important role in shaping how information is distributed, influencing political engagement, and redefining norms around privacy, transparency, diversity, and data governance.(Council of Europe, 2019)

On a societal level the impact of AI on youth has been seen from two perspectives: AI as an enabler and AI as a challenge.

On one hand, AI's benefits have been widely explored in areas such as education—through personalized learning and support for educators; assistive technologies—for improving the lives of individuals with disabilities; and youth services—by expanding access to support through AI tools like chatbots. More broadly, AI is expected to enhance the efficiency and quality of health and public service systems. (Stefan,20).

On the other hand, AI can be seen as a challenge for youth. Recent research highlights how AI can cause social harm by reinforcing historical biases, increasing polarization, and deepening disadvantages—often due to poor testing, weak ethical standards, and lack of user awareness. Key concerns for young people include: threats to freedom of speech and civic rights due to algorithmic filter bubbles and surveillance; violations of social rights caused by biased AI systems; uncertainty around the future of work and the preparedness of education systems; and negative mental health impacts linked to algorithm-driven content. As frequent users of digital technologies, young people also unknowingly provide the data that fuels many private AI systems, making them especially vulnerable to these risks.Stefan, 20

AI and Youth- Report

There have been few initiatives to address the issue of AI and youth, the first major debate was held in Helsinki in 2019 from a Council of Europe's perspective. The main focus of the debate was on how to make sure emerging technologies are created and used in ways that truly benefit individuals, support democratic societies, and strengthen our legal and institutional systems. (Council of Europe, 2019).

In recent developments, major banks have increasingly warned customers about the growing percentage of fraud cases, providing targeted advice on how to protect themselves. This reflects a broader need for proactive awareness and safety measures in digital environments.

Our research on youth, AI, and online safety highlights the perspectives and preparedness of young people in an increasingly digital world. This report presents the findings of a survey conducted among individuals aged 15 to 30, exploring their views, experiences, and knowledge related to artificial intelligence (AI) and online safety. As technology, particularly AI, continues to evolve rapidly and integrate into daily life, it becomes essential to understand how younger generations perceive these developments and how equipped they are to navigate digital environments securely.

The questionnaire consisted of both multiple-choice questions and open questions to capture the range of insights. It was divided into 3 categories; online safety, the use of AI and ethical perspectives. The Survey includes:

- Respondent demographics: age and country of residence.
- Internet concerns: what concerns users most about using the internet and how they protect themselves online.
- Online safety education: whether users have received education about online safety.
- AI understanding and usage: respondents' opinions on what AI means, what they use it for, and if it has provided incorrect information.
- AI governance: opinions on the rules AI should follow, who is responsible for its use, and when it should or should not make decisions on behalf of humans.

The survey was conducted using an online questionnaire (Google Forms) during June and July 2025. A total of 53 responses were collected from individuals from Finland, Germany and North Macedonia. 28,3% of the responses were from Germany, 30,2% from Finland and 41,5% from North Macedonia. Participation was voluntary and anonymous to encourage honest and thoughtful responses.

The chart below shows the percentage breakdown of participants by age group. The most respondents, 58%, were from 23-30 years old and the least respondents were from the age group of 20-22 years old.

Age of respondents

20-22
1.9%

18-20
9.4%

15-17
17.0%

21-23
13.2%

over 23
58.5%
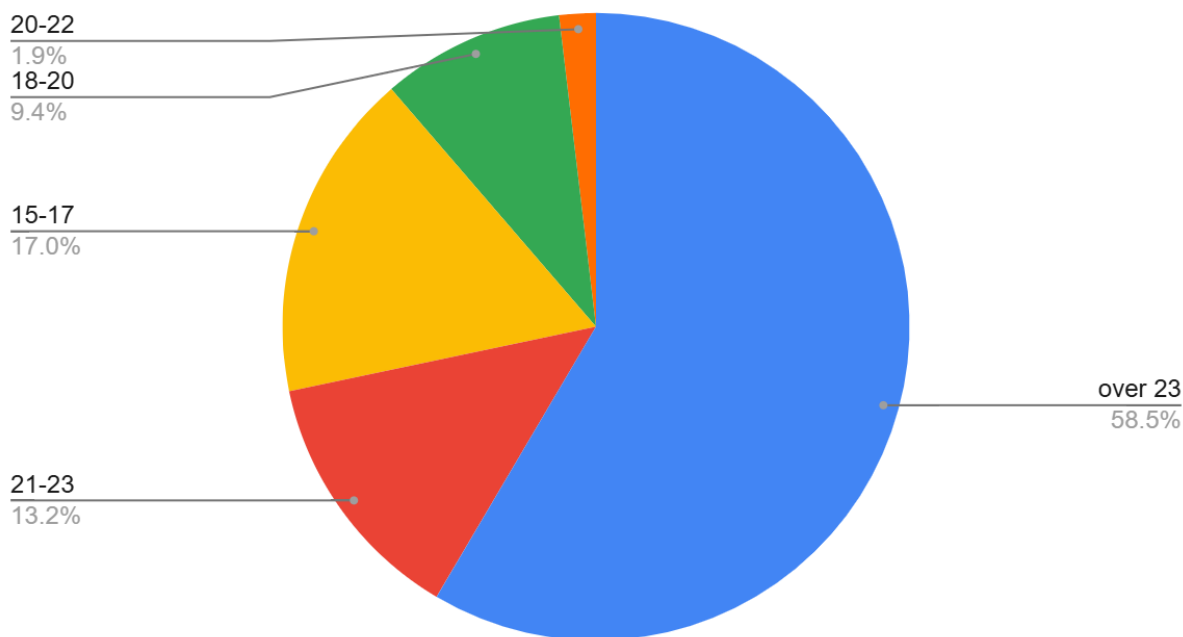
Understanding online safety

The fast pace of technological advancement has created problems in how to keep up with the threats people, especially children and the youth, face on the internet. The development of technology is a great opportunity if we have the means and tools to protect the most vulnerable. According to the UN (n.d.), the threats children and teenagers might face online are cyberbullying, hate speech, disinformation, sexual exploitation and abuse, privacy and security issues online.

Learning online safety early on enhances the well-being of the youth, since being exposed to these threats increase mental health problems, like emotional well-being, self-harm, anxiety, suicidal thoughts or behaviours (UNICEF Innocenti, 2025).

According to UNICEF, online safety for youth involves protecting them from digital threats while also promoting digital literacy, critical thinking, and responsible online behavior (UNICEF, 2021).

The first question was "What concerns you the most about using the internet?". The majority of respondents (42) identified data breaches or scams as their concern. This was followed by sharing of personal information (32 responses) and harmful or disturbing content (26 responses). "Conversations with strangers" option was chosen by 8 participants, while only 1 respondent indicated that they felt the internet is safe as long as users know what they are doing.
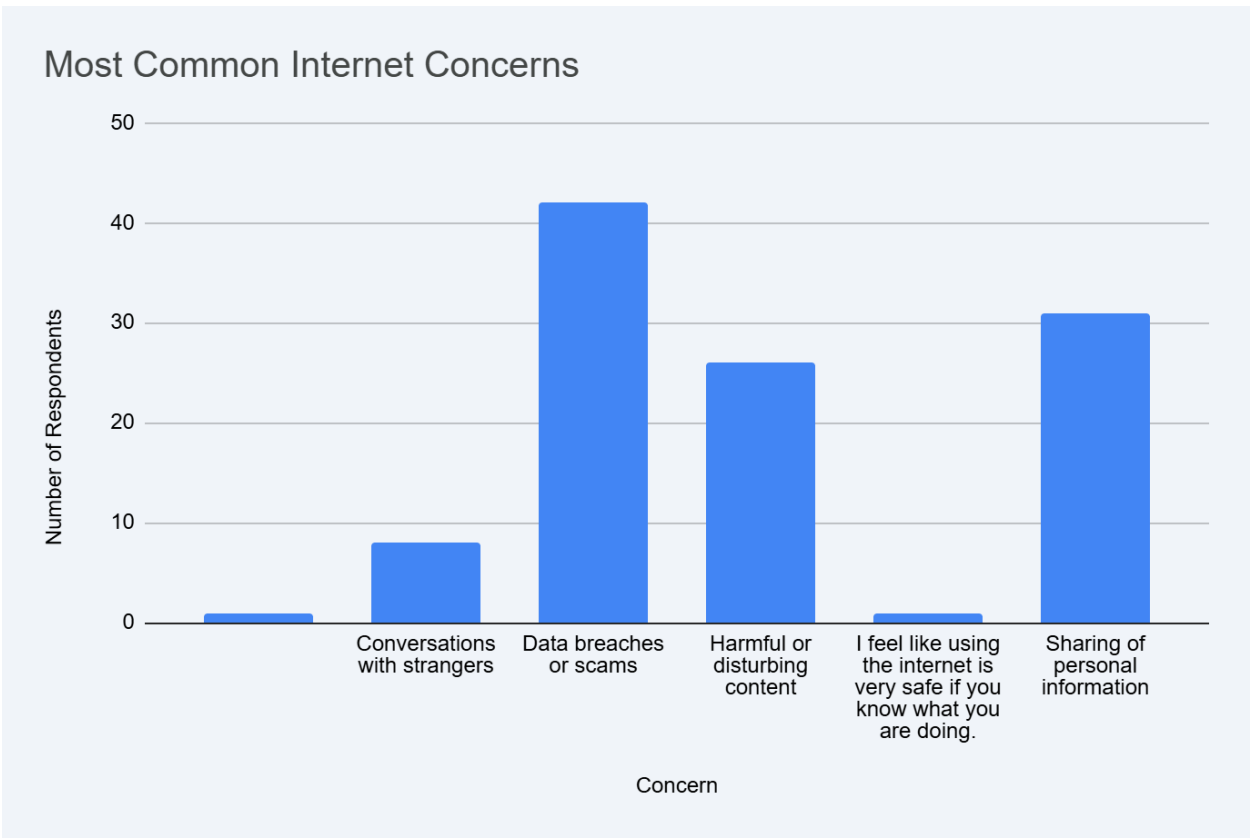
Based on the survey conducted for the purpose of this report it was found that young people are concerned the most with the following digital risks, including data breaches, online scams, and the misuse or unauthorized sharing of personal information. These issues are particularly relevant in today's increasingly connected world, where individuals interact with digital platforms and AI-driven tools on a daily basis.

Despite the growing importance of digital literacy, a significant number of individuals remain unprepared to navigate these challenges. In a recent survey, nearly half of the respondents (25 out of 53) indicated that they had never received any formal education on online safety. This lack of training suggests a notable gap in awareness and protective measures, especially among groups that may be more vulnerable to digital threats. Without adequate knowledge or resources, individuals may struggle to recognize risks, respond appropriately to suspicious activity, or protect their personal data effectively. This highlights the need for targeted digital safety education and awareness-raising initiatives, particularly those that focus on practical skills and real-world scenarios to help users stay safe in evolving digital environments.

Online safety and AI use in Education

In the seminar report provided by the Council of Europe (2019, pp 41-42) the participants have noted the importance of Youth Participation - "to empower young people through education in order to foster critical thinking. This is a critical step in supporting them to recognise and mitigate the risks of AI-powered technology and embracing the new opportunities related to promoting values of democracy and participation."

Based on the survey conducted by the partnering organizations, the results indicate that approximately half of the young people surveyed reported having received some form of education on online safety. This education was provided either at home, at school, or through a combination of both settings. When examining the data from a country-specific perspective, notable differences emerge. The majority of respondents from Finland reported having received online safety information, suggesting a relatively higher level of awareness and access to such education. Respondents from Germany also reported receiving safety information, though at slightly lower rates compared to Finland. In contrast, participants from North Macedonia reported the least exposure to online safety education, highlighting a potential gap

in awareness and preparedness in this context. These differences point to the need for more targeted initiatives in countries where young people have limited access to structured information on safe internet use.

Online Safety Education Received
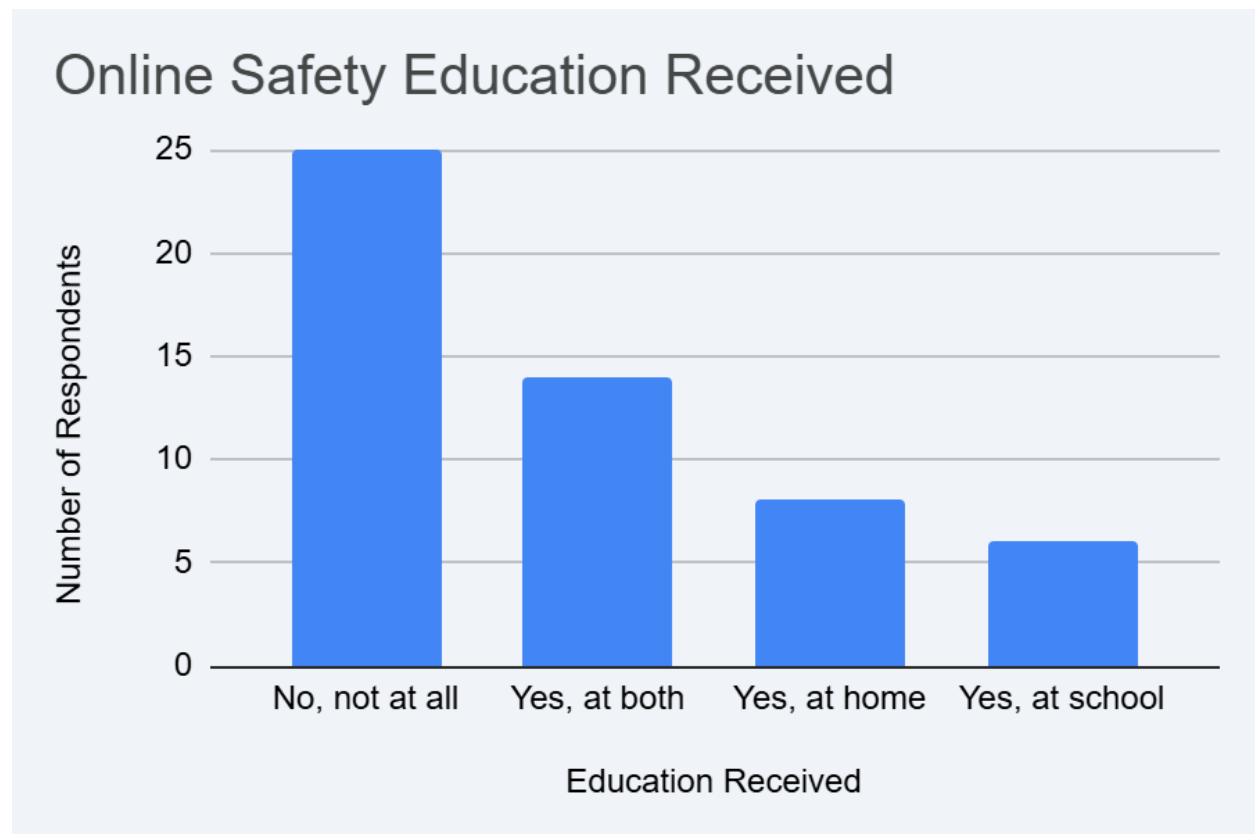
The respondents of the survey were asked to list *"Online Protection Methods"* that they use in everyday online environments. These are different strategies respondents use to safeguard themselves in the digital environment, along with the number of people who apply each method. The data reveals considerable variation in online safety practices among participants.
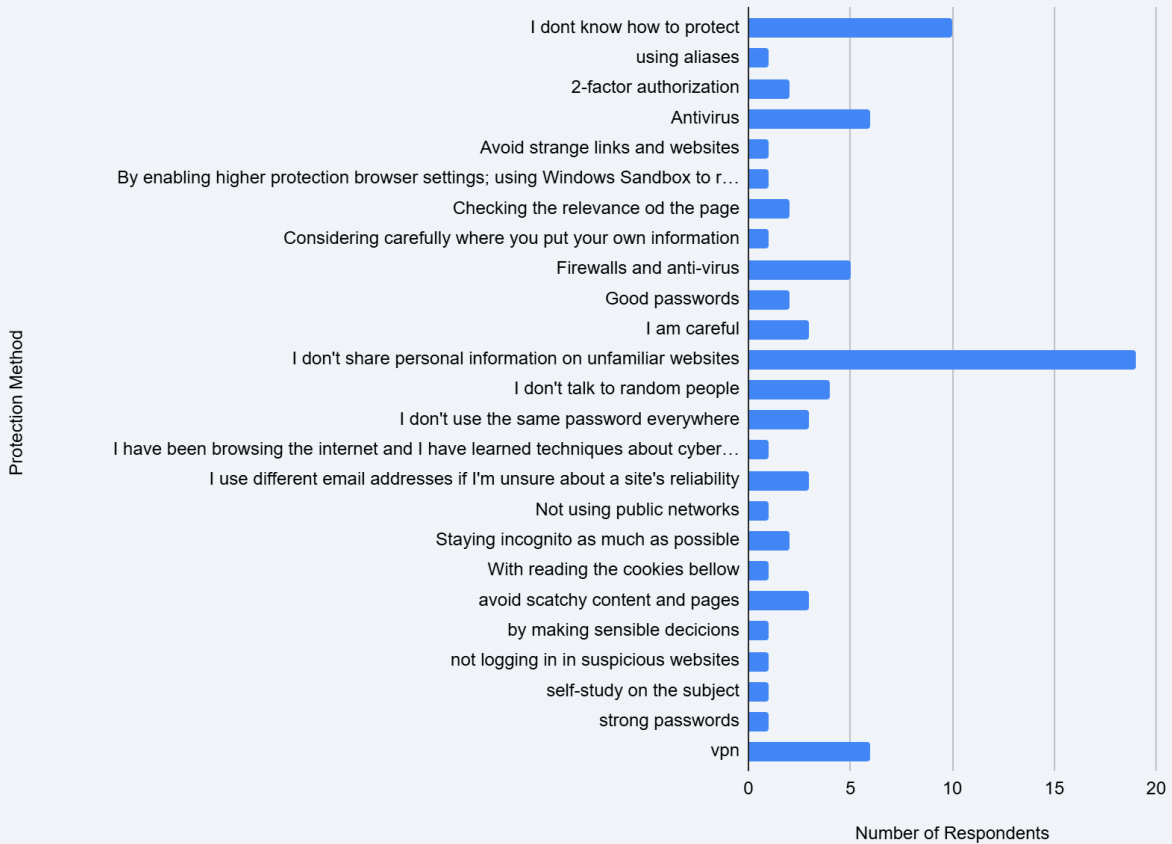
In the survey, participants were asked to share the *"Online Protection Methods"* they use in their daily digital lives. In other words, we wanted to know exactly how they try to keep themselves safe while browsing the internet, using apps, or engaging on social media. The answers showed that young people rely on a mix of strategies—some simple and widely known, others more advanced and technical.

The chart shows how many people use each protection method, with the options grouped according to the responses given and grouped thematically. This gives us a clearer picture of which habits are most popular and which ones are less common. From the responses, it's clear that there is a wide range of approaches—some people stick to basic precautions like avoiding suspicious websites or using good passwords, while others take extra steps such as using VPNs, enabling two-factor authentication, or browsing in incognito mode.

Interestingly, the variety in answers shows that there's no single "one-size-fits-all" approach to online safety. While some participants are clearly confident in using more technical protections, others rely on more general rules like "just being careful" or "not sharing personal information." A small number of respondents even admitted they aren't sure how to protect themselves online at all, which suggests that there's still a gap in awareness that could be addressed through better education and guidance.

Overall, the results highlight that while many young people are actively thinking about their online safety, their methods—and the level of protection they offer—can vary quite a lot.

Online Protection Methods

Protection Method	Number of Respondents
I dont know how to protect	10
using aliases	1
2-factor authorization	2
Antivirus	6
Avoid strange links and websites	1
By enabling higher protection browser settings; using Windows Sandbox to r...	1
Checking the relevance od the page	2
Considering carefully where you put your own information	1
Firewalls and anti-virus	5
Good passwords	2
I am careful	3
I don't share personal information on unfamiliar websites	19
I don't talk to random people	4
I don't use the same password everywhere	3
I have been browsing the internet and I have learned techniques about cyber...	1
I use different email addresses if I'm unsure about a site's reliability	3
Not using public networks	1
Staying incognito as much as possible	2
With reading the cookies bellow	1
avoid scatchy content and pages	3
by making sensible decicions	1
not logging in in suspicious websites	1
self-study on the subject	1
strong passwords	1
vpn	6

The most common protective measure, reported by nearly 20 respondents, is not sharing personal information on unfamiliar websites. This result highlights a general awareness among young people about the risks of disclosing sensitive information online. The second most frequent approach is the use of firewalls and antivirus software, which remains a widely trusted method for defending against malicious software and cyberattacks.

Other frequently mentioned strategies include good password management, VPN usage, and being generally careful when navigating online platforms. These practices suggest that a significant portion of respondents are aware of basic cybersecurity measures and are actively applying them.

However, less common yet notable responses indicate the adoption of more specific or advanced techniques, such as 2-factor authentication, using different email addresses for uncertain websites, avoiding public networks, and considering carefully where to input personal information. A small number of respondents mentioned using aliases, staying incognito, reading cookie policies, and making sensible decisions—all of which demonstrate nuanced awareness of privacy risks.

It is also worth noting that a few respondents admitted they do not know how to protect themselves online, revealing a knowledge gap that could leave them vulnerable to online threats. This aligns with the low frequency of some advanced measures, such as enabling higher browser protection settings, Windows Sandbox usage, and avoiding strange links and websites, which require a higher level of technical knowledge.

Overall, the data suggests that while a majority of respondents are aware of and use at least some protective methods, there is a clear divide between basic and advanced online safety practices. The findings underscore the need for further education and training—especially targeted toward those with little or no knowledge of digital protection—to encourage the adoption of more comprehensive security strategies, particularly in the context of AI-driven environments and social engineering threats.

Terms in online safety

Based on our previous experiences as individuals and as an organization, we have selected the following terms to include in our survey. Respondents were asked to define these terms and identify the potential threats associated with each in online environments.

We aim to investigate whether young people can recognize threats in their online activities related to:

- Digital footprint
- Online security
- Phishing messages
- Social engineering
- (Option: "I don't know these terms")
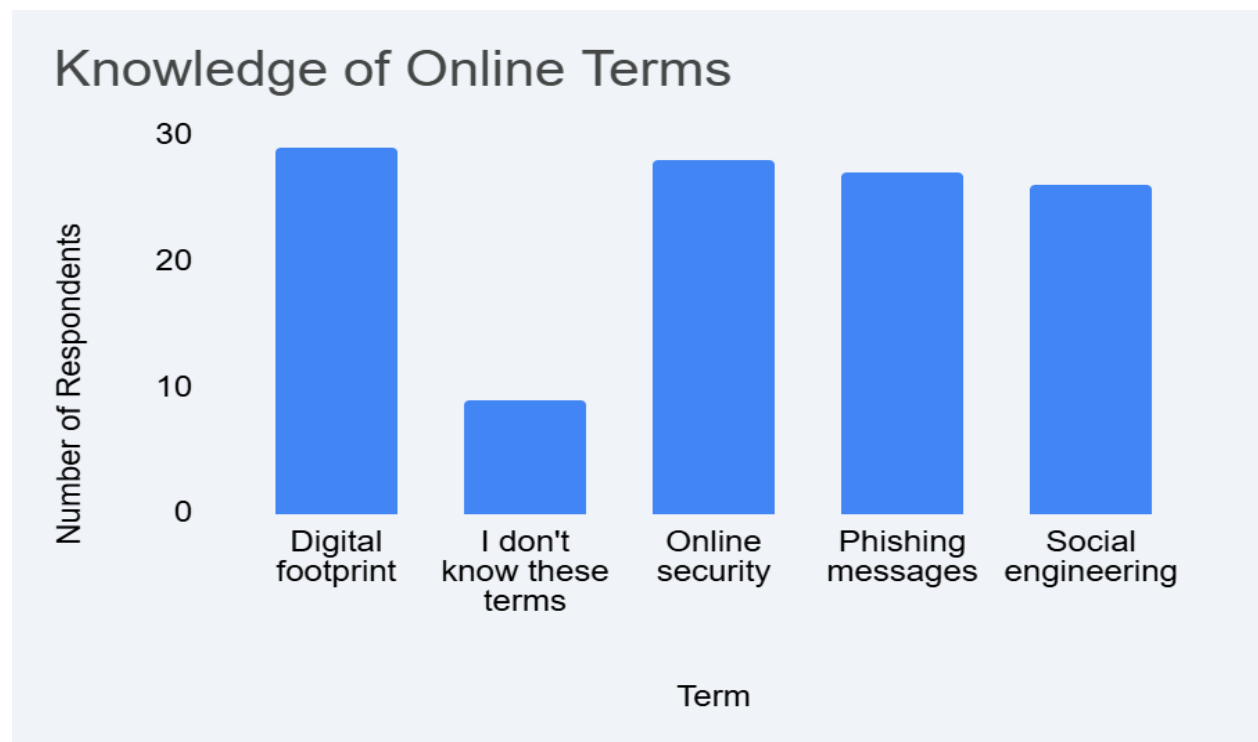
The respondents in the interview didn't mention any particular method nor tool apart from having discussions in addressing safety in the online environment. Most of the respondents listed guidelines and advice they give to the youngsters.

Existing Methods and Tools

The following information on the three countries is drawn from the European Commission's *Education and Training* report (2025), specifically Chapter 6.8, which focuses on media literacy and the safe use of new media.

Germany

In Germany, there isn't one single national plan for teaching media literacy or safe use of digital tools. Instead, different ministries and organizations deal with the topic in their own ways. For example, ministries responsible for digital affairs, education, youth, justice, and health are all involved. Special agencies, like the Federal Department for Media Harmful to Young Persons and the Federal Centre for Health Education, also work on these issues. Since education is mostly managed by each federal state, the Conference of Education Ministers gives advice and recommendations on how schools, vocational schools, and universities should include media education.

In general education schools, media literacy isn't taught as a separate subject with its own curriculum. Instead, it's built into all subjects as a cross-cutting skill. Students are expected to develop abilities such as searching for and processing information, storing data, communicating and collaborating with others, creating and presenting content, staying safe online, solving problems, and reflecting critically on what they encounter.

Based on our research, most respondents indicated that when talking to young people about digital safety, they mainly provide general information and practical advice. This shows that while awareness of safe online behavior is being promoted, it often takes place through guidance and recommendations rather than through a structured, stand-alone subject in schools.

The Republic of North Macedonia

Currently, the Republic of North Macedonia does not have a dedicated national strategy for media literacy and the safe use of new media. However, the topic is addressed within various other strategies and legal frameworks.

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services plays a central role in promoting and developing media literacy in the country. In 2015, the Agency introduced the *Program for Promoting Media Literacy in the Republic of Macedonia 2016–2018*, which aimed to guide the development and promotion of media literacy. Following this, in March 2019, the Agency published the *Media Literacy Policy*, which outlined the next steps after the conclusion of the earlier program.

This policy document set out the main objectives for advancing media literacy in North Macedonia, defined priority areas where efforts should be focused, and identified key competencies in media and information literacy to be developed across different groups in society.

In North Macedonia, the Broadcasting Strategy 2013–2017 highlighted the need to introduce media literacy into the mother tongue curriculum. However, these efforts were never fully implemented. Back in 2010, the Macedonian Institute for Media, in cooperation with the Institute for Democracy and the Bureau for Development of Education, developed a *Handbook on the Study of Media Literacy in the Teaching of Mother Tongue* (for primary and secondary education). As part of this initiative, over 1,000 teachers received training. Unfortunately, the project was halted in its final phase, before it could be officially approved for use in schools.

More than a decade later, media literacy still remains underrepresented in the education system. At present, there is no single law, strategy, or program in North Macedonia that systematically incorporates media literacy, despite numerous curriculum reforms in both primary and secondary education. Based on our research, youth workers also reported that they had neither guidance nor tools to address media literacy and online safety, which further illustrates the gap in structured support and resources for young people in this field.

Finland

Finland's approach to media literacy is guided by the national policy document *Media Literacy in Finland*, authored by Saara Salomaa and Lauri Palsa from the National Audiovisual Institute and published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019. According to a press release from the Ministry on January 21, 2025, these national guidelines are set to be updated during 2025. The Finnish National Agency for Education plays a key role in promoting media education within formal education. It is responsible for preparing and approving the core curricula for early childhood education, basic and upper secondary education, as well as frameworks for vocational and competence-based qualifications.

The emphasis of Finland's media literacy policy is on developing critical literacy, understanding copyright and freedom of speech, and fostering responsibility in creating, using, and sharing content. Other important aspects include media ethics, the role of media in shaping identity, and encouraging social participation. In upper secondary education, students even have the option to pursue a diploma in media studies. Additionally, themes such as online safety and the risks of addiction are integrated into health education within the national core curricula.

The good news is that Finland's approach is clearly working. Young people are getting digital safety guidance from multiple places - school, home, and youth workers - which creates a strong support network. Youth workers are actively sharing practical tips and real-world strategies to help kids stay safe online.

What's encouraging is that most young people already know the important terms and understand basic digital safety concepts. But there's still some work to do - researchers found that youth workers don't have a consistent set of go-to tools or resources they all use when teaching about online safety. Having more standardized resources could make their work even more effective.

This team effort - schools, families, and youth workers all working together - is probably why Finland keeps coming out on top when it comes to media literacy across Europe. It shows that when everyone's on the same page about digital safety, young people really benefit.

Conclusion

The comparison of media literacy approaches across Germany, North Macedonia, and Finland reveals significant differences in how countries structure and implement digital safety education for young people.

Finland stands out as the clear success story, with a comprehensive national strategy that integrates media literacy throughout all levels of education. Their systematic approach - combining formal curricula, family involvement, and youth worker support - has earned them top rankings in European media literacy. The key to Finland's success appears to be treating digital safety as an essential life skill rather than an optional add-on.

Germany takes a more decentralized approach, with various ministries and federal states handling different aspects of media literacy. While this creates some coordination challenges, it allows for flexibility and ensures the topic is addressed across multiple sectors. German youth workers focus on providing practical advice and general information, though this happens more through informal guidance than structured programming.

North Macedonia represents the most concerning situation, where despite recognizing the importance of media literacy over a decade ago, implementation has stalled. The country lacks a cohesive national strategy, and previous initiatives - like training over 1,000 teachers in 2010 - were never fully realized. Most troubling is that youth workers report having no guidance or tools to address digital safety, leaving young people without adequate support.

The contrast between these three countries highlights a crucial lesson: successful media literacy education requires sustained commitment, clear national coordination, and consistent implementation across all educational sectors. Without this systematic approach, even well-intentioned efforts risk falling short of protecting young people in our increasingly digital world.

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