

NEWSLETTER

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THE PROBLEM

The Internet has become an integral part of children and young people's lives. However, the increased time spent online is prompting questions about whether they are in control of their internet usage and if they are aware of the side effects and the causes of the maladaptive behaviours related to excessive or problematic Internet use.



ON-OFF PROJECT LAUNCH

The project kicked on in October in Edinburgh! The objective is to address recommendations calling for empowering tools for children, teachers and parents. To do so it will provide more information, mediation, increased attention, and methodology on how they can mediate youngster's excessive online use and perceptions of causes that trigger the establishment and maintenance of online as well as its consequences that affect well-being and "balanced life" stirred by constant online engagement.

" Research shows that it is not always or not only the time spent online that makes internet use problematic and 'excessive', but the impact of internet use on what might be called a 'balanced life'"

EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME RISKS

- Excessive online exposure may affect physical health (i.e. the sedentary lifestyle can be a prime risk factor for kids' obesity).
- Frequent multitasking due to digital lifestyle could affect their ability to stay focused leading to poor school or academic performance
- The constant feeling of being online negatively impacts their emotional well-being (i.e. a cause of anxiety to youngsters, a behaviour coined with the term "FOMO" (the "fear of missing out") that may lead to poor sleep quality, anxiety, and/or even depression.
- Problematic media use may also be related to lower empathy and social well-being or abstention from physical and offline social interactions.



The partners



Direct Target Groups

- **TEACHERS**, who will be able to exchange opinions and experiences with colleagues from other countries with different educational systems. They will help children develop a deeper understanding of how excessive Internet use may affect their physical health, emotional well-being, academic and/or social life, and prompt the purposeful, respectful and focused use of technology.
- **STUDENTS (12-14 YEARS OLD)**, who will experiment towards identification of hidden messages behind constant online engagement and will be challenged through an AR game approach to adopt a balanced approach between online and offline interactions and activities.
- **PARENTS** who will participate in the AR game playing and testing and who will help along with the teachers their children to develop a deeper understanding of how excessive Internet use may affect their physical health, emotional well-being, academic, familial and/or social life.

Main Project Objectives

The development of a toolkit to:

- Help professionals working with children reach out to children with a view to help them identifying the behavioural, situational and structural causes that lead to online commitment.
- encourage based on fun and positive atmosphere the uptake by youngsters of a balanced behaviour between online engagement and offline alternatives.

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