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Survey finds 65% of parents allow kids under 10 to use internet unsupervised

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A survey of parents on the online activity of their children has found that 65% of mums and dads allow their kids under 10 to use the internet unsupervised. Meanwhile, parents said their biggest concern about their children's connected lives is too much time spent online, with 40% of parents saying their kids connect to the internet before saying good morning each day.

Tellingly, a considerable number of parents - 76% - would like to know more about what their children do online. A vast majority of parents (90%) say they do monitor what their youngsters get up to online, with the most popular methods of doing this being a check on their kids' internet browser (30%) and specifically looking at their search history (21%). Only 21% of parents ask their children what they have been doing online, 12% choose to physically observe what their offspring are up to and 5% go as far as reading their children's private messages.

When they were asked 'At what age did your children first start using the internet on their own?' a notable 26% said it was a young as just five, or less. For 39% of parents it was 6-9 years-old and for a more conservative 35% it was aged 10 or older.

Regarding their biggest worries about their children's connected lives by far the main concern is too much time spent online (31%), followed by viewing adult content (20%), being upset by content (10%), grooming (9%), bullying (8%) and use of their kids' data by big companies (6%).

The survey of 300 parents around the world was conducted by UK based internet safety and privacy specialists B9 Systems.

B9 also quizzed parents as to how they protect their children online, with the most popular answer being simply talking with their children (27%) about the potential downsides of the online world. A close second was limiting kids' to specific time online (26%), whilst just 13% of parents said the main control for their kids' internet safety is through software. Only 9% of parents rely on a family agreement as the main form of control.

Regarding the time their children spend online each day for 32% of parents the answer was less than an hour, whilst 42% said it's up to three. However 23% of mums and dads said their kids spend between three and six hours using connected devices every day and at the extreme end of the scale 2% of parents say their children spend an average of seven to 10 hours online on a daily basis. 55% of parents say their kids do spend too much time online.

Asked what they believe their children do online the big answers were gaming (42%), watching videos (34%), chatting (11%) and studying (10%).

Stuart Spice, founder of B9 Systems who undertook the study, said, "Many of our findings confirmed what we already suspected, that parents are really concerned about their children spending too much time online and that they would like to know more about what their youngsters are up to. We were surprised though to see how young kids are using the web unsupervised."

"Checking on their kids' internet browser and looking at their search history will only tell parents so much. Most savvy children probably know how to hide their activity by adjusting browser settings and clearing search history. Our FamilyHub allows parents to really see how much time their kids are online per device, how much time they are on specific sites and apps and to block connections they deem to be dangerous or concerning."

B9 Systems Ltd is a provider of cyber security tools that provide protection and monitoring of online activity in an easy to use package. Their innovative FamilyHub is a separate WiFi hotspot for the family that protects the kids and allows you to watch their activity in real-time.

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