



PATCH WORLD



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NEWSLETTER II **ICT AND THE FAMILY IN EUROPE**

In the framework of the PATCH-WORLd project, 11 Partners from 9 countries conducted researches on national level with the purpose of singling out the causes of the difficulties parents encounter in approaching ICT daily used by children, with the objective of understanding how they use technological instruments.

ITALY

*Centro Studi e formazione Villa Montesca
& Giunti OS*

The research with families pointed out that the access to ICT at home is growing rapidly, especially in families with at least one child. Levels of ICT ownership at home is generally linked to cultural, socio-economic and generational factors. The use of computers for reasons different from work or study, in particular as playing tools, has a crucial role in the computer culture. Certain skills learned via computer can lead to social enhancement, e.g. problem-solving skills and communication skills, as well as social development. A large number of parents used computers themselves for leisure and work purposes; a number of families regarded computers as an integral part of every day life in the twenty-first century.

Concerning in particular education, children say that ICT is regarded as making homework less boring; they are interactive, save time and enhance the presentation of children's work; the Internet is a good source of information and educational materials; ICT contribute both to making school work more enjoyable and also to pupils' perceptions of achievement, therefore it is perceived as motivational. The majority of parents believe that skills in ICT would be vital for their children's future, in order to help them learn useful skills and gain knowledge. They reported that using ICT raised pupils' confidence and had motivational effects, because contribute to make school work more

But, in their opinions, there are some barriers in using ICT for educational purposes: a lack of explicit instruction to do so by teachers; a lack of confidence on how to use ICT as applicable to specific subjects; a lack of interest in particular subjects

This shows clear implications in terms of addressing how schools deliver out of school ICT opportunities for their pupils in ways that make them more attractive for children.

BULGARIA

*Center for Educational Initiatives (CEI) and
Association Roditeli (AR)*

The focus of the research was the role of ICT in the contemporary Bulgarian society and particularly the influence of ICT over the families' way of living and over the communicational patterns between generations. Also an overview of the general ICT penetration and development in the Bulgarian country was presented along with some major national researches and projects on ICT influence in general.

The research was based on review of the literature – reports, studies, papers; review of the web – existing cross-national, national and regional researches, projects, initiatives, good practices, etc.; review of the national sociological database and the annual bulletins and reports; 4 interviews with experts in the field of ICT researches and in the educational sphere with: Mrs. Fandakova – deputy mayor of Sofia city, Mrs. Bojinova – associated professor of Psychology in Bulgarian Academy of Science, Mr. Apostolov – coordinator and researcher in ARC Fund and Mr. Mihailov – coordinator of the Career Center of Sofia University. Analysis of questionnaire with 30 families from different Bulgarian regions and cities and with different educational and professional background – all of them having child or children aged between 11 and 18 and up years.



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ROMANIA

Grup Scolar Tehnic de Transporturi Cai Ferate Iasi

This project main objective is to create a strong relationship among school, students and their parents. Students and parents will be able to learn new things from one another.

In March 2008 the kick-off meeting of the project took place in Italy. Each participating institution selected the students and parents who would be involved in the project. Grup Scolar Tehnic de Transporturi Cai Ferate selected 17 students and their parents via telephone interviews, based on common guidelines concerning the use of ICT and two of the parents accepted to be filmed during the interview.

During the second meeting of the project, in Karvia, Finland, all the participating institutions presented the report of the first task and established the steps to follow for the next phase of the project.

POLONIA

BD Center

BD Center carried out research among families with children. The focus of the research was to find out the impact of ICT on families life.

The number of families that took part in the research in Poland was 15. All families have at home computer with Internet access. Most families-respondents use computer and Internet every day. The most common ICT use among parents was looking for news and information and communication and among their children: games, looking for information and communication. Next the families talked about ICT advantages and disadvantages. Among advantages they mentioned: easy access to information, communication with others, access to different services, shopping, etc. However, disadvantages of ICT are very important: can cause health problems, devourer of time, dangerous for children and addictive. What's more important in most cases children have better ICT skills than parents what makes it difficult to control how children use Internet, what games they play, and how much time they spend in front of computer.

GERMANY

Saarland University

The survey conducted by Saarland University pointed out that all German interview partners do know and work with digital media. All of them use digital media in their private lives and contexts. Those who are in the working live – that is: all except children, housewives, retired persons – use them in their professional context as well.

So all family members can feel (more) emancipated, and have a broader common base for inter-family discussions. Media demolish hierarchies, in general, but in families as well – a point that was mentioned several times. The big disadvantage seems to be that media consume too much time that is missing elsewhere, as mentioned, also regarding your family (which obviously was the reason for the divorce described above).

Most, but not all of the persons interviewed had already experienced online learning. All communicate regularly with their parents/children with the help of media.



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Especially when they don't live together any more (for example, we interviewed a woman that is divorced – not the person described above) media provide new possibilities for inter-family contacts. Most – but not all – elders say they are “pupils of their children”, and most agree they indeed like and enjoy this fact quite a lot. This seems to be another proof that media help to make disappear inter-family or, in this case, inter-generational hierarchied.

FINLAND

Euneos Oy

In Finland schoolchildren use computers a lot at home, less at school.

There are computers in the homes of almost all 10 – 17-year-old children, according to statistics. Nine out of 10 children also have Internet access. Despite that fact, parents know little about what their children do on the Internet. Neither do parents keep tabs on their online pursuits. Parents do not know the web services their children mostly use, where they communicate and publish. The Internet has a lot of influence on children's lives at home. Computers play a minor role in schools: there are lots of computers in this country, but very little use of them is made for educational purposes.

Finland belongs to the countries that have invested big sums of money in computers and in networking, but as teaching methods have not changed at all over the years, the advantages of computers were not used in accordance with the money spent on them. The capacity of computers is not utilized, as only few teachers have taken them into real educational use. Finland belonged to eight out of 19 countries where pupils had the most devices per student. However, there were big differences between schools. The capacity of educational ICT increased a lot between 1998 and 2006 in Finland and in seven other countries. It did not mean that utilization of computers increased correspondingly. Teachers in Finland usually claim to have positive attitudes towards computers and to open and distant learning. Despite of that, most of them contribute only a little or nothing to ODL in their own teaching. This contradiction is mostly explained by making some general excuses as to why it is not possible to take ODL into use in one's teaching. The worst barriers for introducing ODL in schools seem to be psychological and social ones in the first place.

Teachers are offered more and more facilities of educational ICT, but this abundance of new means does not bring us new brains, unfortunately.

A great number of parents in Karvia, the location of the 2nd meeting, participating in the Patch-World project were highly interested in promoting the chances of cooperation between schoolchildren and their parents using web technologies.

After schools started again in the middle of August 2008, there were discussions about the topics of Patch-World for parents in the local primary Kantti school where Mrs Marjo Yliluoma, the local teacher involved in Patch-World, chaired the meeting of parents.

MALTA

AKS

The results achieved with the research and interview phase in Malta pointed out that there seemed to be a general agreement by all those interviewed that the main advantage of ICT was that it brings in the family a good amount of information, vast knowledge and simplifies communication.





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Some adverse comments were that ICT was addictive and time consuming. With regards to difference in the level of ICT literacy between parents and children it was clearly evident that children are more knowledgeable, adaptable, resourceful and versatile in the use of ICT. All parents who were interviewed claimed that they all knew what their children were doing when they were on the computer and what games they were playing. However only few of them, whose children were less than 14 years old played together with their children. All parents answered that they know the use and potential of ICT tools in education. They helped their children in some way or other to search for educational information on the Internet. However there was only one family who performed on-line training activities. All answered that they interact with their children with regard to the use of ICT for educational purpose by supervising and advising them. Those who were interviewed are aware and expressed concern about the dangers of Internet. The absolute majority of those interviewed talk to their children about the dangers of Internet. All encourage their children to evaluate the information they find on the web and claim to have some sort of security system installed and updated but in most cases it is very basic. All parents claim to track and monitor their children when they are on-line, at time by surprise inspections and by checking the history.

NETHERLANDS

Stichting Reflexion

In The Netherlands the survey concerning the use of computers in families was carried out with a group of children of a school in Linne and their parents.

PCs are present in almost every household and internet access is available in over 95% of family homes and more than 65% of these homes have a broadband connection.

Concerning the penetration of PCs and the internet in daily life, there is hardly a difference between rural communities and towns. But the availability of outdoor playing facilities is highly different in towns and rural environments. Most or all of the children stated that in the end they preferred playing (outside) with their friends, which is very well possible in a community like Linne.

When such facilities are lacking, as is the case in some of the major cities, the choice of children to spend most of their leisure time with games on their PC (and watching TV) is at least understandable, given the lack of outdoor alternatives.

Most parents and older children are familiar with ways to retrieve information over the internet and with simple transactions like shopping, second hand auctions and banking.

Apart from making life easier these developments seem to have no decisive effect on the way the family operates: after school or work they have some time for themselves (sports, homework, meeting friends). Seen from this perspective, the PC and the internet seem to have little impact.

There is a general division between parents and children when it comes to using PC's and internet. Few parents play PC or online games meant for children; few children are involved in what their parents may do (banking, shopping). Each operates in a separate world, which of course brings along some risks.

The basic ways of family life are not immediately influenced by the availability of an internet connection at home. It is the relation to the outside world that is changing: instead of going to a library information will be available in seconds when a search engine or Wikipedia is addressed.

Since the early days of school TV and even more after the first distant learning applications were introduced, there has been a constantly increasing awareness of the importance of new technologies for education, like computer based learning and internet based learning.

Nowadays schools in the Netherlands are equipped with at least a standard set of PC's with broadband internet access, allowing all pupils to engage in e-learning activities during a substantial part of their learning time. Moreover, schools count on the fact that their pupils will have equivalent facilities available at home as they indeed have in most cases.

Learning has partly moved to a new platform, enabling pupils to communicate and cooperate, while bridging geographical borders and discovering the importance of a common language for this purpose.



TURKEY

BOLU PROVINCE DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

The Outcomes Concerning the framework of the research of PatchWorld project in Turkey can be resumed as follows:

Many parents indicated that they had bought the computers to contribute to their children's education.

Some of the parents use computers for education and search. They indicated to use computer or internet for 2-3 hours a day (except working hours). The majority of children indicated that they rarely use the computer or internet together.

42,1% of the tutors indicated that the risk and danger of using computer or internet is the links which register to sexual websites.

31,9% of the tutors indicated that their children play intelligence games on computer and internet, on the other hand 25,5% of the students indicated that they play sports games.

The reason why the children use computer and internet is homework and searching for education. 21,8% of the tutors and 25,3% of the students indicated the most important utility of ICT as preparation for school and homework. Part of the parents and children declared that the biggest harm of ICT is addiction to computer or internet. 56% of the parents and 52% of the students indicated that the usage of ICT effects in positive way of the communication in family, and that the usage of ICT effects in positive way of the communication with world. Many indicated that they solve the problem about how to control the usage of ICT tools by talking.

52% of the tutors and 76% of the students indicated that they haven't got a thought of not using or removing the ICT tools from home.

72% of the tutors specified that their children don't go to internet cafes, but 48% of the students indicated that they go to internet cafes.

The most used tool among the ICT tools is the internet by 39,6% at schools. It's followed by computer as 35,8% and mobile phone as 20,8%. Computer and internet media exist in 100% of the schools.

Utopia

Students and pupils work on their everyday experiences and learn to see school subjects in the context of real life. Both teachers and students can give full flow to their creativeness, which gives rise to innovations. Working together with peers intensifies collaboration.

There are both asynchronous activities regardless of time and place and contacts strictly bound to the time and place, on the other hand, such as live online sessions.

Students and pupils learn competences, more than abstract subjects. They feel stronger as their competences grow better, and they can realize it by themselves, even with a less strict control system of notes. This leads to a rise of enthusiasm and engagement on both sides. Teachers have a better use for the unproductive time they have used for controlling students.

Teachers coach their students and pupils, and let them set new and more demanding goals for themselves. Teachers are there to help students to construct their knowledge content and improve their skills. Evaluation is more versatile as there is more variety in products of students.

Products are recorded and saved in digital portfolios of students. Sustainable competences of students are certified in documents such as EuroPass. Intercultural knowledge of students increases in educational collaboration across borders. Better self-confidence and self-respect lead to human growth.

(An extract from Ilpo Halonen's blog, <http://daf.eduprojects.net/blog/>, July 12, 2008)