SCREENAGERS*
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT
USING ICT, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUTH WORK

Using ICT, digital and social media in youth work

A review of research findings from Austria, Denmark, Finland,

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

FOCUS GROUPS

1,865
PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH THE PROJECT

CASE STUDIES

YOUNG PEOPLE

The Screenagers International Research Project is a collaborative study focussing on the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work. It is a partnership between agencies in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Finland, Austria and Denmark.

This project is funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND FOREWORD

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge all those organisations and individuals who participated in and contributed to the Screenagers International Research project, in particular our partners for this project, my colleagues in the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNI), Verke in Finland, the Centre for Digital Care in Denmark and WienXtra in Austria.

NYCI would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the youth organisations, youth workers and young people who helped to set up and took part in the focus groups and inputted for case studies and to all the survey respondents, without you this report would not have been possible.

A particular thank you to Clare Harvey, YCNI, who did sterling work in analysing the five national reports to create this report.

We also want to recognise Anna Gunning, NYCI, for doing an excellent job in coordinating the project, the Erasmus+ programme for invaluable funding and Leargas, the national agency for all their support.

Foreword

The Screenagers International Research Project is the latest in a series of activities examining the use of ICT and youth work, including the NYCI Screenagers Conference in 2012 and the Screenagers International Seminar in Dublin in 2014. NYCI was committed to respond to the needs identified at each of these events and we began to do this by bringing together five organisations from across Europe into an international partnership.

The international dimension was instrumental to the realisation of the aims of the research project; to explore the extent, value and development of the use of ICT, social and digital media as a tool in youth work, and to provide an evidence-base for recommendations to promote the development of ICT in youth work. Along with an opportunity to share best practice, the international partnership gave greater insight into the extent and nature of the use of ICT in youth work settings in other countries and also identified some of the challenges that arise and need to be overcome.

Probably the most striking conclusion across all the partners is that despite different political and youth work contexts, there was much similarity about what needs to be achieved to realise the amazing potential of ICT use in youth work. There is a growing recognition of the many different ways that ICT, digital and social media can contribute to, or transform, the activities, roles, and relationships experienced by children and adults in youth work settings. The research identifies the importance of practitioners and other adults in youth work having guidance and opportunities to become capable, competent, and informed about the educational role and potential of ICT, and support to use ICT to strengthen many aspects of youth work practice.

NYCI welcomes the Screenagers International Project Report as a valuable contribution towards gaining the necessary policy commitment and the realisation of strategic financial investment in the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work.

I believe that if we implement the recommendations in this report it will ultimately lead to a youth work community that values ICT and provides opportunities for both adults and young people to achieve all kinds of possibilities.

Mary Cunningham, Director, National Youth Council of Ireland

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INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Background to the research

This Erasmus+ funded study is the latest in a series of collaborations aiming to support the use of ICT in youth work. The inspiration for the study came from the Screenagers International seminar held in Ireland in 2014 (supported through Youth in Action) which had provided a space for partners from across Europe to engage in a new dialogue on ICT in youth work and to identify opportunities to work together.

A key feature of the 2014 Screenagers International seminar was the collective sense of opportunity around ICT in youth work, and the keen desire to build on the momentum in the areas of youth work policy and practice. Seminar participants felt that international cooperation and sharing of practice has been a major influence in widening workers' horizons and supporting creative innovative thinking. Following the success of the international seminar, and building on the relationships which had been developed, partners secured Erasmus+ funding in early 2015 to conduct parallel research studies in five European countries.

This report presents an overview and synthesis of the five research studies. The aim of the collaborative research was to explore the extent, value and development of the use of ICT, social and digital media as a tool in youth work, and to provide an evidence-base for recommendations to promote the development of ICT in youth work at organisational, national and European levels.

The research project is consistent with an objective of the **Erasmus+** programme, to promote:

'…*an increased level of digital competence [and] more strategic and integrated use of ICTs…by education, training and youth systems*'.

The research is very relevant to the objectives of the **Europe 2020** strategy, and also to the **Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention** in April 2015, which stated that adapting to the growth of ICT presents a challenge for contemporary youth work practice throughout Europe:

'*Young people are increasingly engaging with new technologies and digital media. There is clearly a role for online youth work practice, in terms of exploiting a new space for youth work in a meaningful way, supporting digital literacy and enabling young people to deal with some of the associated risks. The practice implications for youth workers lie in new competencies required and new forms of boundary maintenance in relationships with young people*' [Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, Brussels, April 2015]

This report presents an overview of key findings from research conducted by the five partners, and more specifically it aims to identify and demonstrate:

- the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work;
- best innovative practice;
- outcomes of the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work;
- the challenges and barriers, and supports required;
- training available for the youth sector and recommendations for training needs.

Research partners

Research partners within this collaborative research project were:

- Verke (Finland)
- Centre for Digital Youth Care (Denmark)
- The Youth Council for Northern Ireland
- wienXtra (Austria)
- The National Youth Council of Ireland was the lead partner for the project.

Research design

A planning seminar was hosted in Belfast in March 2015 by the Youth Council NI, at which the five partners agreed to design the project around the following:

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the extent of the use of i) social media and ii) digital media in youth work?

2. What types of digital media are used in youth work, and for what purposes?

3. What is the value / contribution of the use of social and / or digital media in youth work for young people, and for youth work practice?

4. What are the challenges of the use of social and / or digital media in youth work and how can these challenges be overcome?

5. Is there training available to the youth work sector, and what supports are required to enable youth workers to apply social and digital media as a tool in their youth work?

Methodology

Variation in Methodological approach

Given the different contexts in which the research was undertaken, it was agreed that a standardised research design with identical data collection tools was not feasible. At the research design stage, the research partners agreed that different methodological approaches to answer the 5 common research questions could be employed, but that fieldwork must include:

- Desk research to provide an overview of the youth work and ICT context

- A survey, to encompass the central research questions
- 4 focus groups (2 with youth workers and 2 with young people)
- 3 case studies

In practice, research designs and sampling methods varied considerably across the five countries, as did the balance placed between qualitative and quantitative data. For example:

- Partners from Finland had previously conducted an ICT survey of youth workers based in municipalities, and so were able to repeat this exercise and compare findings against their earlier survey;
- Partners in Northern Ireland designed two separate online surveys of full time and part time youth work provision, in response to the structure of the youth work sector in that country;
- Partners in Austria designed an extensive online survey and also opted to conduct focus groups with specific organisations and individuals;
- Partners in Denmark elected to take a broad sample of professionals working with young people, which included counselling and education providers;
- The Screenagers research undertaken in the Republic of Ireland employed a mixed methods approach (combining documentary, quantitative and qualitative), however the study relies mainly on qualitative research methods to explore and answer the key research questions.

Given the very different youth work contexts, and variation in sampling frames and questionnaires, readers are cautioned against making direct country by country comparisons, particularly in respect of the statistical findings.

Sampling, response rates and potential bias

Partners in Finland had previously constructed a sampling frame of all municipal youth work practitioners, and so were in a position to disseminate the survey directly to youth workers, and to calculate response rates with a high degree of confidence.

Without access to full sampling frames, the other four partners relied on existing networks and a variety of 'snowball sampling' methods to promote the survey, the corollary being that response rates could not be calculated.

Several partners expressed a concern that youth workers who use ICT and/or have an interest in ICT may be more inclined to complete the survey than those who do not, so creating bias in the responses and an overestimate of the extent of ICT use in youth work. Whilst this does not nullify all survey findings, this element of potential bias must be acknowledged.

There was also some variability in approaches to focus group selection. Some partners focused exclusively on youth workers with proven expertise in the use of social or digital media, whilst other partners sought the views of groups with mixed experiences, and also the views of youth work managers.

Primary data sources

Partner	Responses to online survey	Focus groups	Number of case studies	Input from young people
Finland	945	4 (30 participants)	3	Interviews with 11 young people
Austria	147	3 (17 participants)	4	2 focus groups with 8 young people
Denmark	125	3 (18 participants)	3	2 focus groups with 17 young people
Northern Ireland	169	4 (28 participants)	4	Feedback from 12 young people
Republic of Ireland	283	2 (12 participants)	3	2 focus groups with 26 young people
TOTAL	1669	16 focus groups (105 participants)	17 case studies	74 young people

Partnership arrangements

There was regular contact between the five partners throughout the research process, including 2 x 2-day seminars in March 2015 (in Belfast) and November 2015 (in Helsinki). Three skype meetings were held during the intervening months, hosted by Austrian and Danish partners. Additionally, partners were in regular contact through the use of Google Drive and Google Docs. By November 2015 each partner had completed their research fieldwork and had produced a country report (where relevant, translated into English). Each report was circa 30 pages and structured to an agreed template which included the findings of the desk research, online survey, focus groups, case studies and country recommendations.

Partners convened for a two day meeting in Finland in November 2015 to share research findings and discuss the commonalities and differences between the studies. This shared reflection and analysis of the evidence led partners to identify a wider set of recommendations, and to plan the next stages for potential collaboration.

Structure of this report

Drawing on the five country reports and also on the meeting of partners in November 2015, **Chapter 2** outlines key commonalities and differences between research findings. **Chapters 3 to 7** briefly summarise research findings from each country (all five country reports are available to download in full on the Screenagers website www.youth.ie/screenagers). Each chapter includes a brief introduction to the partner organisation, an

overview of the youth work and ICT contexts, a selection of survey and focus groups findings, and country recommendations. Further research findings from focus groups and feedback with young people can be found in the individual country reports. **Chapter 8** presents a selection of abridged case studies of the use of ICT in youth work practice. **Chapter 9** draws on the meeting of partners in November 2015 and refers to joint recommendations and proposals for future collaboration.

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OVERVIEW AND FINDINGS

2. Overview and Findings

Each country involved in the study focused on a number of central research questions to explore the extent, purpose, value, challenges and training in the use of social and digital media in a youth work context. Each country used the same core methodological approaches but emphasised themes which were most appropriate to their particular setting. Therefore, it is not appropriate to make statistical comparisons due to the differences in contexts, sampling, survey and focus group questions.

Extent of the use of social and digital media in youth work

Youth workers in each country are using social and digital media to varying degrees, though it is evident that the majority of youth workers across the five countries are using ICT in some shape or form within their work. Republic of Ireland research found that over three quarters of their respondents (77%) used social and digital media in their work, 80% of Northern Ireland's full-time workers who responded use some form of social and digital media and Finland, Austria and Denmark found that over 90% of their respondents use it in their work.

Emails were cited as one of the most common uses of ICT within youth work across all countries. Facebook was by far the most commonly used social media tool. There was recognition in most countries that there was an increase in the use of apps such as Snapchat and Instagram by young people - however the number of youth workers using such apps does not match the popularity and usage of these by young people. YouTube was cited by both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland as being frequently used by youth workers in their work.

Digital photography and film making were also evident within most countries as a common use of digital media within youth work.

Gaming had a varied range of use across the study. Only 11% of youth workers surveyed in the Republic of Ireland used gaming in their youth work, 14% of full-time workers and even fewer part-time workers in Northern Ireland used gaming in their youth programmes. Gaming was one of the most popular uses of digital media in Denmark, with 41% of the respondents (of those who stated they use digital media). The Austrian survey found games consoles make up 44% of equipment. In Finland 57% of all survey respondents had games consoles in the youth work setting, although a minority used online gaming.

Purposes of the use of social and digital media in youth work

Each country's survey found that the most common use for social and digital media was communication and information purposes with young people and colleagues, which was most frequently done through email, texting and Facebook. Youth workers use it to inform about, and promote, activities and programmes. Social media has proved useful in recruiting young people for programmes. ICT is used for documentation within the youth work setting. Overall, whilst the extent of social media use may appear to be high, partners found that usage was often unidimensional in purpose, and that the fuller, more creative, potential of social media had not been realised on a wide scale across the youth sectors.

Social and digital media has, to varying degrees, also been used to provide advice and guidance to young people. Finland, Denmark and Austria have frequently used it to provide online counselling to young people however only 4% of Republic of Ireland survey respondents stated they would offer online counselling and none of Northern Ireland's survey respondents said they would use it for counselling.

Other purposes for social and digital media stated in the surveys and focus groups were: learning a new skillset; training and education; animation; film making; photography and creative writing. Social and digital media has also been used by youth workers to support young people in lobbying, citizenship and campaigning activities. The case studies and information provided during focus groups illustrate that, where ICT is being used in creative and innovative ways, it offers a versatile and powerful tool to support youth work.

Value of the use of social and digital media

Many youth workers involved in the study reflected that young people's lifestyles are so entrenched in technology, that it is not an option as to whether the youth service should use social and digital media. If youth work fails to embrace the use of technology and social media there is a risk of becoming outdated and irrelevant to young people who use youth work services. Youth work has the opportunity to fill the gaps which sometimes occur within the home and school in supporting young people to understand technology and the risks that might be involved.

Digital media often complements other activities. Northern Ireland's survey results showed that social and digital media was rated as 'highly effective' or 'effective' by the majority of respondents in terms of supporting citizenship, life skills and thinking skills, and participation and advocacy. Findings from Finland highlighted that the use of digital media offers young people new experiences and learning opportunities, and the chance to experience success. ICT has made communication with young people easier and more immediate, while using contemporary young-person accessible ways (Finland and Austria).

ICT and media have the value of providing an opportunity to involve young people who would normally have no contact with youth services (Denmark). The Republic of Ireland research noted that using social media, particularly for communication purposes, had actually increased face to face time with young people by enhancing attendance.

Challenges of the use of social and digital media in youth work

One of the challenges identified through the study has been the lack of understanding of ICT terminology amongst youth workers, and several of the studies reported an issue with the language of 'digital media'. Both the Finnish and Northern Ireland studies found a tendency among workers to focus on social media, and the Finnish report highlighted that youth workers were unable to define what 'digital media' is.

A very common challenge across the five countries has been a perceived or actual deficit in media skills. The Finland report shows that 48% of workers felt that they lacked personal competence. Austria's respondents also stated they didn't have enough knowledge of ICT and digital media, as did Denmark. The majority of respondents to the Northern Ireland survey of full time youth workers indicated that ICT training would be 'very useful'.

Another challenge which has been highlighted through the study is insufficient and lack of ICT equipment. Poor connectivity also poses issues in using social and digital media within youth services (Finland, Republic of Ireland).

Funding constraints were highlighted as a barrier in accessing adequate equipment and availing of relevant ICT training to support and enhance the use of social and digital media in their work. Insufficient working hours have also been a barrier in using social, but especially digital, media. ICT can save time when it all works well, however youth workers across all jurisdictions have identified the negative impact on time resources and the effect this can have on achieving other youth work goals.

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in particular highlighted the challenges around child protection issues, where staff need to be up to date with the latest developments in order to keep children safe and support their awareness of safety online.

All countries have identified a lack of infrastructure, stating that governmental and organisational guidelines are often lacking and that youth workers have requested more frameworks and strategic direction in how to use technology to support their youth work.

It was highlighted that there needs to be a changing of mind-sets amongst some of the policy makers and funders in order to truly embrace the technological world young people are growing up in.

Measuring outcomes has also been a challenge. There are few established approaches for doing this but the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of ICT is vital in moving forward with the use of ICT in youth work.

Training in social and digital media for the youth work sector

In Finland slightly under a third (32%) of all respondents reported that within the last 12 months they had received training on the online world of young people or use of the Internet. Based on the open survey responses, more training is very much in demand.

In Northern Ireland levels of training appear to be low, particularly within the part-time sector where less of a fifth of all respondents had received work-related training in social and digital media over the last two years. Of those who did undertake training, the vast majority had received only one session and 10% had two training sessions.

For Denmark nearly two-thirds of the respondents indicate that they are aware of training in the use of ICT and digital and social media. However, only about one third of the respondents said that they have received training in the use of ICT and digital and social media.

Republic of Ireland found that less than a quarter of youth workers (24%) had received training on use of social and digital media in youth work, with a significant 76% of youth workers stating that they had never received training on use of social or digital media in youth work.

In general, there was a willingness from participants in the study across all five countries to engage in training including learning about latest digital developments, how to use ICT to enhance youth work, producing media related resources such as film making, copyright issues and using digital games. Participants in Austria assessed their own skills in many areas positively, and the interest in learning more is considerably high. Participants want to acquire additional skills in the areas of 'media critique – media analysis'. Interest in developing skills in digital games and programming (coding) was relatively small.

Findings from some of the partners indicate that the willingness to engage in the digital media worlds of young adults was cited as a question of attitude more than age.

National Recommendations

Each country developed recommendations based on the research findings, which are reproduced below. Whilst many of the recommendations are nuanced to reflect the particular contexts and needs within each country, the recommendations show recurrent calls for investment in infrastructure, strategic planning, development of multi-level training, and a mechanism for youth workers to access guidance and support.

Finland

1.Youth work must invest in the development of an infrastructure to support the use of online tools and digital media

- Youth workers and young people should be heard before the purchase of equipment for youth work activities.

- To ensure the development of youth work, youth workers should be provided with conditions, which enable them to use various software and applications on their work devices and to try out new types of digital technology.

- The equipment and infrastructure provided <u>must support the realisation of educational and youth work goals.</u>

2.When digital media is used, more attention should be paid not only to the medium itself and a communicative approach, but also to contents and activities related to digital media

- Digital media must be understood as a key growth and operating environment for young people, in which youth work can support agency and independent initiatives among young people.
- Digital media should also be understood as part of the key content of youth work. This will require that youth workers <u>recognise their role as media educators</u> and <u>have the competences </u>required to encourage young people to produce media content.

3.Developing the use of digital media requires strategic planning

- Strategic-level planning involves identifying the various factors that affect youth work activities and developing them in a comprehensive manner.
- The use of digital media must be target-oriented and youth workers must have sufficient resources and competences for carrying out their work.
- To improve the quality of youth work, it must be evaluated using various indicators and key figures.

Denmark

1. **Upgrading of pedagogical employees**
   The case studies, the survey and the focus groups have made it evident that an upgrading of skills among professionals is necessary in order for ICT and media to gain a foothold in educational and social work. It is crucial that it does not turn into sole projects where only passionate activists become the driving force.
2. **Municipalities must establish clear and detailed strategies for the digital pedagogical work**
   The professionals must be introduced to the different tools depending on the purpose. There is also a need for generally applicable efforts at the workplace and it is important to devise an ICT strategy, both for municipal and private organisation, with respect to implementation, training, educational practices as well as ethical and legal aspects.
3. **Increased dialogue with vulnerable children and young people about their use of the Internet**
   It is very important to be critical of the use of ICT and media in the professionals works and reflect on the conducted selection and deselection which also applies to young people. It is important that

children and young people are aware of their digital identity and how they relate to their behaviour on the internet.

4. **Access to rapid network connections and new technology must be upgraded**
On a completely low-practical level, the work with ICT and media also requires enough available equipment and that the equipment in question works.

Austria

1. Not all young people have the same level of competency in social and digital media. Young people require differentiated and need-oriented support of digital media skills.

Study results contradict the image of adolescents as one uniform crowd consisting of "digital natives" who already possess all the competences which are required for equal participation in a digital society. Instead, they highlight the demand for differentiated and need-oriented support of digital media skills.

2. There is a need to strengthen adolescents' reflective, critical and analytical media skills.

We should put particular emphasis on how to strengthen adolescents' critical and analytical skills. Here, pilot schemes are required which develop methodical approaches suitable for youth work and also put them to the test. Media critique and analysis with young adults was also identified as one area with the biggest training backlog in youth workers.

3. Youth work's USP should be recognised as trustful relationships and closeness to the media-related lifeworlds of young people

Youth workers as adult guardians have the potential of taking a special position in media-reflexive and orientation processes of young adults. On one hand, because they are often believed to work closer to and with the media-related life worlds of adolescents (compared to other adult figures, parents or teachers). On the other hand, youth workers often enjoy a high level of trust. From that, another argument in favour of the importance of relationship work can be derived: effective, media-pedagogical interventions require existing mutual trust. From a pan-social point of view, youth work can offer a major contribution towards digital media skill support by potentially reaching even some of those adolescents, albeit not all of them, who are not (sufficiently) supported at home or by formal education systems (compared to schools).

4. Focus on low threshold approaches embedded in everyday work

To equalise the support of digital media skills in youth work only through selective media projects is not enough. Media projects can do so much; they can expand the scope of possible actions in relation to media in everyone involved or they can boost self-worth through a sense of achievement. However it could well be the case that youth work will show its biggest efficiency through continuous engagement with media-related topics in everyday encounters with adolescents.

5. Youth workers need to live up to their media-educational responsibilities: training, time to engage with media and opportunities for professional exchange

One needs to ascertain that media skills/media education is given sufficient significance in youth workers' basic training. Among areas of action of active/action-based media work, especially digital games seem to be an expandable area in which there lies great potential for youth work. Currently, youth work is only very marginally touching the field of coding/programming – methods and approaches that also work well within the context of youth work, are still under development for the most part. Also, the wealth of possibilities of using tablets in low-threshold, quick media work don't seem to be fully appreciated yet.

Northern Ireland

Organisational level

Survey respondents were asked what actions would be useful to support ICT within their organisations. The majority indicated that a specific funding stream to support digital initiatives, improved ICT infrastructure, guidance on professional ethics in the use of social media, professional development opportunities, sharing of good practice, access to taster sessions and a directory of training providers would be useful.

Strategic level

Participants in the focus groups offered their thoughts on what strategic steps need to be taken to support development of digital and social media across the service. These centred around the need for:

1. A policy directive to support this approach to youth work, with high level commitment to an ICT strategy involving the Department of Education, the Education Authority NI, and the voluntary sector
2. A youth service strategy for ICT, supported by sustained investment and based on need
3. Relaxation of the restrictions on social media within the statutory sector, and a proactive approach by the youth service to address e-safety (in line with the Marshall report, 2014)
4. Access to a resource hub, leading to a fuller demonstration of the value of ICT as a tool for creativity and participation within youth work pedagogy
5. Development of partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, at both organisational and sector-wide levels, academia and private sector, and also at North/South and EU levels
6. Organisational policy and/or sectoral guidance on the use of social media in particular
7. Opportunities for continuous professional development

Republic of Ireland

Arising from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, NYCI recommends the following 4 recommendations. These recommendations, if implemented, would help to support, enhance and embed the use of social and digital media in youth work practice in the Republic of Ireland.

Recommendation 1: Develop a National Digital Plan for the Youth sector.

In the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (BOBF), outcome 2.7 identifies the promotion of "*the use of technologies and support acquisition of digital skills of young people*" as an outcome. To achieve this outcome, a National Digital Plan for the youth work sector should be developed and resourced to support the sector (in collaboration with the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and other stakeholders) to embed social and digital media in youth work practice. It should incorporate supports to promote continuous training and professional development for all youth workers. It should also include measurable actions to:

- encourage and support youth workers to embed social and digital media in their youth work practice,
- enhance ICT capacity and awareness in youth work in partnership with relevant Government Departments and stakeholders,
- encourage a culture of innovation and creativity,
- increase investment in the ICT infrastructure to support and enhance the use of social and digital media in youth work and improve broadband infrastructure throughout the country particularly in rural regions and
- provide information, advice and tools to promote safer, more responsible and more effective use of the social and digital media.

Recommendation 2: Design and delivery of bespoke or specialist training on the use of ICT, social and digital media for youth workers.

There is a general deficit across the board in the youth work sector in relation to knowledge, skills and competency of youth workers on the use of social and digital media and its application in youth work practice. The only training currently available to youth workers in the Republic of Ireland focuses on the use of digital media. Youth workers felt bespoke training on use of social and digital media needs to be developed to support youth workers to incorporate new forms of social media into their youth work practice. Training on the use of social and digital media for youth workers should include 'mindful' use of technology in the youth work sector. It should also encourage a critical analysis of the use of ICT. Such training should form part of the third level curriculum for youth work students and should also be available to youth workers as part of their continuous professional development.

Recommendation 3: Create networking and information opportunities for youth workers to include annual and regional events

The investment in the establishment of networking and information opportunities for youth workers where they can meet periodically to share and exchange best practice on ICT use in youth work, is extremely important. Such opportunities could be organised on a regional, sectoral and thematic basis. Youth workers in the focus groups said it was hard to *'keep on top of the new and rapidly changing forms of social and digital media'* that young people were using. Creating a space where they can network and have the opportunity to both contribute to active learning and professional skills development, receive advice on how to overcome challenges in using ICT in their youth work and share examples of quality media youth work practice, is essential. This must be adequately resourced and will require sustained and appropriate investment.

Recommendation 4: Establish an ICT Support Unit for the Youth Work sector.

The Support Unit would function to provide support for youth workers in all aspects of ICT use in their youth work practice. The Unit would have responsibility for implementing the National Digital Development Plan for the Youth Work sector. The Unit personnel would be responsible for the design and co-ordination of bespoke training to youth workers at all aspects of their professional career (as outlined in Recommendation 1) and the creation of networking and information opportunities for youth workers (as outlined in Recommendation 3). The unit would also respond to information enquiries, provide specialised training to address skills and competency deficits (as outlined in Recommendation 2), offer on-line safety guidance and assist youth organisations to develop organisational policy on use of ICT. This must be adequately resourced and will require sustained and appropriate investment.

3

FINLAND

3. Finland

The following chapter draws on extracts from the Finnish national report, including a brief overview of the youth service and ICT context, some of the key findings from survey and focus groups, and recommendations. The full report is available to download on the Screenagers webpage.

Background to the organisation

Verke is the National Development Centre for Online Youth Work. Verke is one of the 13 national service and development centres for youth work appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (see http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Nuoriso/nuorisotyoen_kohteet_ja_rahoitus/kehittamis_ja_palvelukeskukset/?lang=en). Its goal is to promote and develop the use of digital media and technology in Finnish youth work. Among other activities, Verke provides training and consultancy and produces research-based information related to its field.

An overview of youth work and youth services in Finland

Although the youth service in Finland dates back to the 19th century, the first steps towards a system of municipal and parish youth work were only taken in the mid 20th century, and the first youth act - the Act on Youth Committees and State Subsidies for Municipal Youth Work- entered into force in 1972. Since then, youth work legislation has been amended about once every ten years, with the next Youth Act expected to come into force in August 2016. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for coordinating youth policy at national level and the Regional State Administrative Agencies at regional level.

The current Youth Act defines the general principles underlying the implementation and development of youth work and policy, and government funding. According to the Youth Act, the purpose of youth work and policy is to i) support young people's growth and independence, ii) to promote young people's active citizenship and empowerment and iii) to improve young people's growth and living conditions. The Act defines youth work as *"the promotion of active citizenship in young people's leisure time, their empowerment, support for young people's growth and independence, and interaction between generations."*

The Youth Act defines 'young people' as those under 29 years of age, and emphasises that young people must be given opportunities to take part in the consideration of matters concerning local and regional youth work and youth policy. They must also be heard in matters that concern them. Although the age-based definition of the act covers all children and young people up to 29 years of age, the key target group for youth work in most municipalities comprises those aged 13 to 17.

Regional and national youth work is conducted by municipalities, organisations and associations, and churches (particularly the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland). It is difficult to estimate the precise number of organisations conducting youth work – partly because many do not classify their work with young people as 'youth work'. Municipalities are the key organisers of youth work, and in 2015 Finland consisted of 317 municipalities.

Funding for youth work in Finland is mainly provided by the state, municipalities and parishes. State support for youth work is mainly financed from the turnover of the betting agency, Veikkaus, which is owned by the Finnish state, and support is allocated by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Parishes mainly finance their own youth work.

ICT context

Finland is considered a technologically advanced country. The Digibarometer 2015, a study that evaluates how digitalisation is utilised in 22 countries, ranked Finland in second place, beaten only by Denmark. Despite this, Finns do not use the Internet actively for participating in society and are also relatively mediocre performers in ICT-based citizenship skills.

In recent years, central government has drawn up a number of strategies to promote its national information society policy. These strategies have aimed at improving not only the Finnish economy and economic competitiveness, but also citizens' level of ICT competencies. The need for better ICT competencies is particularly prominent in the education sector. The "Survey of Schools – ICT in Education" study conducted by the European Commission in 2013 indicates that Finnish schools have good ICT equipment, but their active use in teaching and the development of competencies lag behind that of other countries.

Another essential area of information society policy and youth policy involves improving the participation of young people. The Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012–2015 (Ministry of Education and Culture) states that "*All children and young people will be ensured the basic prerequisites for participation and social inclusion in the information society.*" According to the programme, the growth of children and young people into active and socially responsible citizens would also be facilitated by improving their media literacy and enhancing their participation in the information society.

Use of ICT by young people

According to Statistics Finland's survey on the use of ICT by individuals, practically everyone aged 16–24 (99%) uses the Internet, and up to 89% use it several times a day. Young people use the Internet for communication, entertainment, following various media, information retrieval and managing their affairs in particular. (ebrand 2015; Statistics Finland 2014; Kaarakainen et al. 2013; Rahja 2013.) The Internet is still used primarily at home, but also in educational institutions, when on the move and at friends' homes using mobile devices. The most popular social media services among young people are YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook and Facebook Messenger, Instagram and Spotify. They most frequently use social media from 6 to 9 p.m. Up to 92% of young people use social media services on their smartphones.

There is a strong focus on the use of digital media for communication. The use of instant messaging has increased significantly over the last few years. For example, in 2015, 82% of young people were using WhatsApp, whereas two years previously the corresponding figure was 8%. As many as 77% of people aged 16–24 use instant messaging daily or almost daily. Young people's use of social media has shifted in recent years from public commenting on Facebook to private instant messaging groups – although these can include hundreds of members.

Participation in various online communities is more or less a social obligation for young people today. Almost everyone (91%) aged 16–24 also follows some social networking service on at least a weekly basis. Young people often participate in online groups that are somehow linked to their offline communities. The popularity of digital games among children and young people is also high compared to the European norm. On average, Finnish children aged 9–16 are up to 11% more likely to use the Internet for gaming than their European peers. Mobile and console games are the most popular digital games among young people.

The EU Kids Online survey conducted at a European level indicates that only a small percentage (5%) of Finnish children and young people aged 9–16 have experienced online bullying. Among the 25 countries studied, Finnish children experienced the least abuse of personal information they had published online.

ICT in youth work

Finnish youth work has generally harnessed the characteristics and phenomena of new media or technologies very rapidly after their emergence. Since the 1980s, video game consoles have been more or less permanent fixtures, alongside pool tables, at youth centres. Whereas information began to be posted on Finland's first youth work websites in the 1990s, by the dawn of the 2000s youth workers were working in the online communities where young people were spending their time.

The social media revolution began to impact on youth work after 2005. Facebook was adopted as a key tool in municipal youth work in particular. The technological advances of recent years, particularly in mobile technology, have also been reflected in youth work as new online tools and social media services have become popular among young people and adults alike.

Methodology As outlined above, youth work in Finland is delivered by municipalities, NGOs and parishes. The sample for this study drew specifically on youth services delivered by municipal youth workers, and therefore the findings do not relate to NGO or parish youth work. In 2013 Verke had conducted a comprehensive survey of how municipal youth workers use the Internet in their work, and so the findings from the 2015 study allowed a direct examination of developments during the two intervening years.

Online survey : A link to the survey was disseminated to about 3,000 people working in the youth work sector, whose contact details had been collected from municipalities' websites. A key sampling criterion was that respondents work directly with young people, rather than youth service administration. The survey was open from 9 April to 26 April 2015 and could be taken in Finnish or Swedish. A total of 945 responses was received from 232 municipalities across Finland.

Focus groups : Four focus group interviews were conducted with a total of 30 youth workers from four municipalities across Finland. Each group involved workers employed in municipal youth services, and from different practice settings including open youth work, outreach, youth information and counselling services.

Three case studies of practice were compiled. These included) HypeCon, a study of young people's use of digital media for youth event production, ii) a gaming group within Merirasti youth centre, and ii)a multi-professional online chat service involving Bystrom youth services.

Input from young people In the course of researching the case studies, interviews were held with 11 young people.

Key survey findings

Extent, purpose and value of the use of social and digital media in youth work

94% of survey respondents reported using the Internet in their work with young people, primarily for keeping in touch with young people, for spreading information and for providing advice and guidance. More than 80% of the respondents use the Internet at least weekly for communicating with young people.

Day-to-day online encounters with young people have increased considerably since the previous survey of youth workers in Finland conducted in 2013. Back then, about one in four respondents indicated that they used the Internet daily to keep in touch with young people, while in 2015 almost one in two (45%) report doing so.

More than three in four survey respondents (77%) use the Internet for spreading information at least weekly. This most commonly means publishing information about the organisation's activities and events, and increasing the visibility of the youth worker's own work. A total of 70% of workers reported that they also shared content that is relevant to young people.

The most common uses of the Internet in youth work:

      1. Communication with young people

      2. Spreading information

      3. Advice and guidance

      4. Supporting the self-arranged activities of young people

      5. Media Education

The Internet is used for advising and guidance purposes by 85% of the respondents. The most common advice and guidance methods are individual and group chats, and question and answer columns.

About 70% of survey respondents engage in real-time discussions with young people online, and 60% reported that they reply to young people's questions online. However, less than half (40%) of the respondents use the Internet for advice and guidance at least once a week. About one in two youth workers report also using the Internet at least monthly to support young people's self-arranged activities (52%) and for media education activities (46%).

How youth workers use the Internet for youth work

More than 75%	50–75%	25–50 %	Less than 25%
- inform young people about youth services' activities	- share content that is relevant to young people	- comment on online content produced by young people	- produce text-based online content together with young people
- make their work or their organisation's activities visible to young people	- engage in a real-time conversation with young people	- get to know new young people online	- play online games with young people
- keep up to date with young people's latest news	- answer young people's questions online		- blog or vlog with young people
	- produce text-based online content for young people		

In respect of gaming, a total of 57% of all survey respondents, and as many as 80% of those engaged in open youth work, have a game console at work. In addition, more than 60% of the respondents think that digital games are a good tool in youth work. Although attitudes towards the use of digital games in youth work are fairly positive, in their gaming activities youth workers do not seem to benefit in a highly active manner from the opportunities presented by the Internet. Nearly two thirds (62%) of municipal youth workers report not using the Internet for gaming in youth work. Less than one in ten respondents use the Internet on at least a monthly basis for gaming as part of youth work.

Online services and social media

Youth workers use the following online tools most frequently: email (97%), the organisation's own Internet pages (97%) and Facebook (96%). A total of 86% of respondents use email at least weekly, while 73% use the organisation's website and 89% use Facebook. The use of these services for youth work has increased since 2013. For example, twice the number of respondents now report using their organisation's website on a daily basis.

The use of microblogging services has increased significantly since 2013. 15% of respondents use micro-blogging services at least weekly, compared to a much smaller percentage a couple of years ago. Increasing use of Twitter has presumably been a key driver of this change. The number of youth workers who use cloud storage services at least weekly has also doubled since 2013 and is now 21%.

Most used Internet services in youth work:
1. E-mail
2. The organisation's own website
3. Facebook and Facebook Messenger
4. WhatsApp
5. YouTube

Based on the survey material, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp are the most popular instant messaging services among youth workers. The majority (81%) of respondents use Facebook Messenger for youth work, and 40% report using it on a daily basis. WhatsApp is used by almost two out of three (63%) respondents. Slightly over a quarter (27%) report using it daily. Over three quarters (77%) of the respondents report using the video service YouTube, although it has relatively fewer daily users than the other services mentioned above (7%).

60% of survey respondents report using Instagram and 15% say they use it daily. Instagram is mainly suitable for sharing photos and videos, and is most easily used on a mobile device. Content published on Instagram is more public than content on WhatsApp, for example. Users of WhatsApp tend to limit their audience more carefully. Based on the survey responses, younger workers have introduced Instagram to youth work, while their older colleagues use it relatively little.

Professional competencies and training needs

Respondents had an overwhelmingly positive attitude towards using the Internet for youth work. 92% of them think that municipal youth work should include an online dimension. More than 80% of the respondents also believe that more use should be made of the Internet in youth work.

A comparison of the responses revealed that training provided by the employer correlated with better evaluations of personal know-how and competence. Slightly under a third (32%) of all respondents reported that within the last 12 months they had received training on the online world of young people or use of the Internet. Based on the open survey responses, more training is very much in demand.

Respondents identified areas where their professional competence was relatively weak. When youth workers assess their competences to use the Internet in youth work, they felt more confident in traditional areas of youth work – such as interaction, guidance and counselling – and less confident about their technical skills. Youth workers feel that media literacy is their strongest Internet-related competence: some three out of four (75%) of the respondents felt that their media literacy was at least good. Another strong area of expertise described in the responses is social media know-how, which seven out of ten respondents estimated as good. Interestingly, although youth workers feel that they are competent social media users, they still feel least certain in terms of their skills in using social media for youth work: 55% of respondents assessed their expertise in this area as good or excellent.
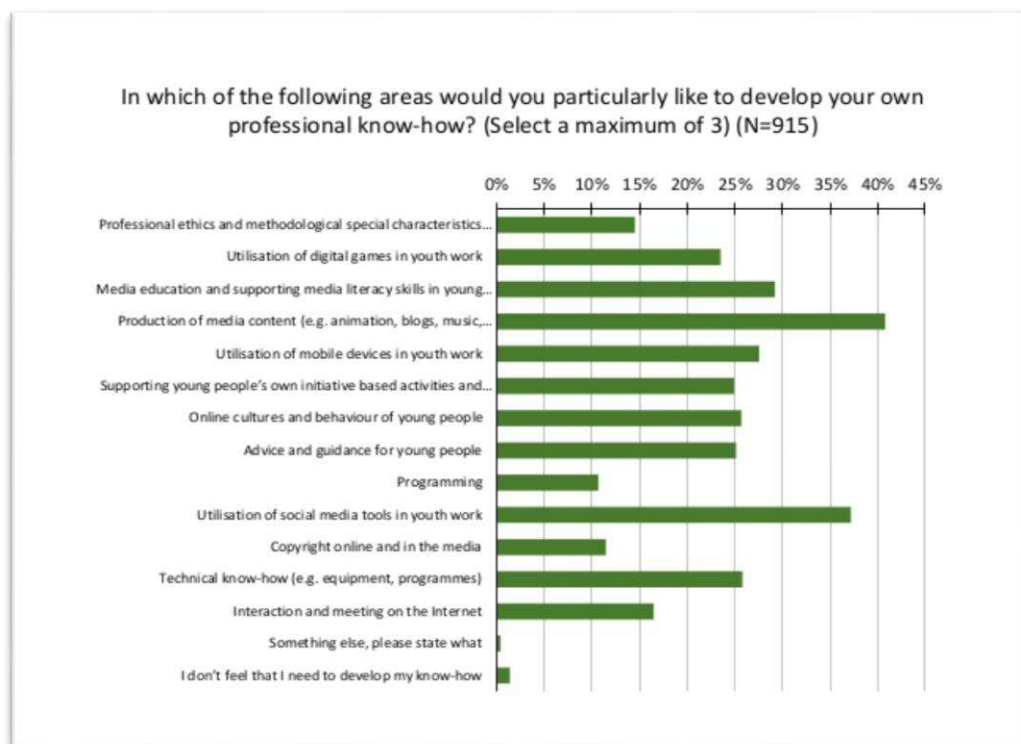
The respondents' assessment of their know-how and expertise

Good / excellent	Moderate / poor
(more than 50% of the respondents)	(more than 50% of the respondents)
- Media literacy	- Online culture
- Social media and the use of social media tools in youth work	- Online influencing and activism
	- Immaterial property rights
- Online interaction and encounters	- Production of media content
- Youth guidance and counselling	- Media education and support for young people's media skills
- Professional ethics and specific methodological characteristics of working online	- Support for young people's self-arranged activities and self-expression online
- Online safety	- Use of mobile devices
	- Digital games and the use of games in youth work
	- Programming
	- Technical know-how

Youth workers felt their competences to be weakest in the areas of technical know-how and digital gaming. Only 3% of the respondents felt that their programming skills were good or excellent. Less than 15% felt that their competences in using digital games for youth work were good or excellent, while 20% felt that their competences in digital or online gaming in general were good or excellent. The respondents estimated that their competences in producing media content were rather poor, since less than one in four respondents felt that they had good or excellent skills in this area.

Training needs

As indicated in the table below, youth workers seem to be the most interested in developing their media-content related competences. Over 40% of the respondents would like to become more competent media content producers, while almost one third (30%) would like to develop their competences in media education and supporting young people's media skills. Youth workers are the least interested in strengthening their coding skills, with only about one in ten employees interested in developing their competences in this area.

In which of the following areas would you particularly like to develop your own professional know-how? (Select a maximum of 3) (N=915)

Challenges

Slightly over half (54%) of those survey respondents who use the Internet stated that some factors in their work hindered their use the Internet for youth work. The most common hindrances were:

- insufficient equipment (49%)

- feeling that they lacked personal competence (48%)

- insufficient working hours (47%).

Many (32%) felt that their use of the Internet was impeded by a lack of clearly defined goals. These negative factors were repeated in the open answers to the survey. Furthermore, the respondents reported the existence of fundamental challenges posed by the work community's negative attitude towards the use of the Internet and poor organisational infrastructure.

The youth workers' responses suggest that personal motivation is the best way to improve the use of the Internet for youth work. According to the results, the factors most frequently contributing to the use of the Internet are, firstly, an understanding of the key role the Internet plays in young people's lives (91%), and secondly, the desire to harness the possibilities of the Internet in youth work (68%). In addition, less than one third (31%) feel that the opportunity to organise one's own work flexibly and access to sufficient equipment are key factors contributing to the use of the Internet for youth work. Other frequently mentioned factors include the support provided by the supervisor and the organisation, and the opportunity to update and develop personal competences.

Key points from focus groups

Terminology : Participants within the four focus groups held different interpretations of ICT terminology and were unable to define offhand what 'digital media' encompasses, or were at least uncertain about the language. It was noted that in each group interview, the discussion on digital media turned to social media. The interviewees were asked to describe the last work-related activity they had performed using digital media, and all of the interviewees had either updated social media channels or interacted with young people through the social media. Many interviewees thus appeared to find it difficult to grasp meanings of digital media outside the social media.

Observations on young people's use of technology: Focus group participants observed that the young people they work with appear to have an almost continuous use of digital media through their smartphones. Some interviewees felt that young people are 'physically present but mentally absent', although many interviewees pointed out that young people use mobile devices as a social activity. They use their own telephones, but can do so as a group. Sometimes they show phone-based videos and photos to youth workers. Young people also play together using their own phones. Youth workers find this interesting: young people spend time physically alone in the same room, but are very social online at the same time.

Pace of change and harnessing the potential of digital media : All groups included youth workers who stated that they found it difficult to keep up to date with rapidly fluctuating trends. Young people use so many social media services that the interviewees have difficulties keeping up. Most of the interviewees reported using the most popular social media services at work, but only a few seemed to have a clear grasp of the possibilities of digital media and what the Internet could offer to youth work.

Balancing the risks of young people's internet use : Many interviewees were concerned with the amount of time young people spend on digital media and the risks involved in social media (eg. social exclusion, gambling, risks of picture sharing and grooming). On the other hand, they also recognised the social aspect and benefits of gaming activities. One group pointed out that gaming activities at the youth centre could attract young people who would not otherwise visit the centre.

Digital media in youth work The interviewees pointed out that the use of digital media is often an accompaniment to other activities. For example, either using their personal phones or devices provided by the youth centre, young people may shoot music videos during band activities, or photograph art created during art activities. According to the youth workers, young people most often use their own phones to take photographs and shoot videos. The interviews suggest that, although such auxiliary use of digital media is typically initiated by young people themselves, youth work plays a significant role in this by providing premises and devices and enabling physical encounters.

It seems that in the municipal youth work services, a fairly high number of activities were focused around the use of digital media. The groups stated that digital media is often used in a variety of group and workshop activities. For example, all municipalities have held or are currently offering photography courses and editorial activities, in which young people can try out article writing, blogging, video recording and radio broadcasting. In one interview, the youth workers described their activities based on the production of digital music, DJ activities at the youth centre and an animation workshop for young people. In one municipality, youth workers are planning to launch group activities related to digital gaming.

Young people can be more digitally skilled than workers :Although youth work services organise a variety of digital media workshops for young people, the interviewees questioned the need for such activities in the future, as young people tend to be highly independent and are sometimes more adept than youth workers in their use of the digital media. Young people have been successfully involved in updating social media channels and reporting from events. Furthermore, because they often know more about social media and the related possibilities, youth workers carefully listen to their ideas and suggestions. For example, youth workers in one municipality opened an Instagram account on the initiative of young people.

Goals and added value :The discussions with the youth workers also touched on the reasons for using digital media in youth work, the goals of doing so, and the value it adds to youth work. All of the groups interviewed acknowledged that young people are online and that the Internet is a "natural" everyday environment for them. Bearing this in mind, the youth workers stated that they have a duty to use digital and social media at work, at least to some extent.

They thought that the use of digital media offers young people new experiences and learning opportunities as well as a chance to experience success, which increases young people's self-esteem. In addition, digital media can be a very useful tool for group building and developing social skills. For these reasons in particular, the interviewees viewed the use of digital media in youth work as a positive phenomenon.

According to the interviewees, the benefits of the use of social media include rapid sharing of information and easy means of reaching young people. They find it easy to stay up to date with the latest news on young people and to "like" their updates on the social media, for example. Communication begun online can facilitate the first steps in face-to-face communication.

Challenges : The interviews revealed that insufficient equipment and competences are the key challenges in terms of the use of digital media in youth work (which echoes the findings of the statistical data).Other barriers mentioned include functionality of applications, network connections, and insufficient working time. Some interviewees felt they required more specific guidance as to what kind of content is shared via which social media channel and how often, while others would like their working communities to take a more relaxed approach to using social media. It was also noted that access to training varied substantively among the interviewees.

Recommendations

Youth work must invest in the development of an infrastructure to support the use of online tools and digital media

- Youth workers and young people should be heard before the purchase of equipment for youth work activities.

- To ensure the development of youth work, youth workers should be provided with conditions, which enable them to use various software and applications on their work devices and to try out new types of digital technology.

- The equipment and infrastructure provided <u>must support the realisation of educational and youth work goals.</u>

When digital media is used, more attention should be paid not only to the medium itself and a communicative approach, but also to contents and activities related to digital media

- Digital media must be understood as a key growth and operating environment for young people, in which youth work can support agency and independent initiatives among young people.
- Digital media should also be understood as part of the key content of youth work. This will require that youth workers <u>recognise their role as media educators</u> and <u>have the competences</u> required to encourage young people to produce media content.

Developing the use of digital media requires strategic planning

- Strategic-level planning involves identifying the various factors that affect youth work activities and developing them in a comprehensive manner.

4

DENMARK

4. Denmark

The following chapter draws on extracts from the Danish national report, including a brief overview of the youth service and ICT context, some of the key findings from survey and focus groups, and recommendations. The full report is available to download on the Screenagers webpage.

Background to the organisation

Since 2004 The Centre for Digital Youth Care has worked to provide professional help to vulnerable young people through the use of digital media. The focal point is its online youth counselling service, Cyberhus.dk which provides approximately 8000 consultative interactions each year. Children and young people can talk safely and anonymously to a trained adult through the virtual counselling chat rooms.

An overview of youth work and youth services in Denmark

Work with young people in Denmark is delivered within four main sectors; the government, local authorities, private organisations and a number of associations within the Danish National Church.

The Danish government supports the development of young people through funding of private institutions such as universities, colleges and schools. Danish municipalities (97 in total) are responsible for ensuring the operation and quality of schools and the running and funding of day care facilities, nurseries, kindergartens and after-schools clubs (parents also make a financial contribution in order to ensure day care for all children in Denmark).

The government also ensures the operation and development of voluntary social youth work through a variety of government funds for which associations can apply. Denmark has a historically proud tradition of voluntary work with young people, and there are currently at least 50 private organisations working unpaid to improve conditions for children and young people. A study carried out by the Danish National Centre for Social Research (2012) shows that almost one quarter of all young people aged 16-25 years are participating in voluntary work.

In Denmark, youth work is governed by the Social Services Act. Children and young people are defined as everyone between 0 and 23 years. The Act outlines the purpose of social youth work, which is:
- To offer counselling and support in order to prevent social problems
- To offer a range of public services which can also be preventive
- To meet the needs arising from physical or mental impairment or special social problems

Denmark takes the incorporation and respect of children and young people's rights in legislation and practice very seriously. Børnerådet (Council for Children) is a governmental council ensuring the voice of children and young people is heard in public debate. It evaluates practices that affect the rights and opportunities of children and young people on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There are also associations that bring together and represent organisations who work with children and young people. Two examples are Dansk Ungdoms Fællesråd (DUF) (the Danish Youth Council) and Ungdomsringen (the Danish Organisation of Youth Clubs). DUF is a service comprising 70 children and youth organisations. DUF encourages youth participation in associations and democracy. The core values of the organisation are participation, dialogue, volunteerism and influence (DUF). Ungdomsringen is an association of all free time, junior and youth clubs in Denmark. The association is an independent, political association whose work is based on non-profit principles, and ensures the practice of quality and holistic thinking through proactive participation in public debate (Ungdomsringen).

ICT context

Developments in Denmark have led to ICT and media now forming an integral part of daily life. In 2014, a reform of the Danish primary and lower secondary school introduced a requirement to integrate ICT in all disciplines as an integral and natural part of teaching.

Just as Denmark ensures young people's rights are upheld in "real" life, they have given attention to how they apply to young people's online lives. The Danish Media Council for Children and Young People, the Danish Consumer Council Tænk, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Digital Identity, Danish Science Factory and Børnerådet have jointly formulated a summary for children and young people about their rights on the Internet.

- Everyone has the right to participate in democracy, including the right to have access to the Internet.
- Everyone has the right to seek and share information and ideas. No one shall be prevented from it.
- Everyone has the right to meet with others on the Internet and participate in groups, clubs and associations like in "real" life.
- Everyone has the right to privacy and data protection on the Internet.
- Everyone has the right to education and access to knowledge on the Internet.
- Children and young people have special rights to protection and counselling on the Internet.

Use of ICT by young people

EU Kids Online is a multinational network of 33 European countries seeking to improve public knowledge of European children's online opportunities, risks and safety. The study highlights that:

- 98% of all Danish children between 9 and 16 years have access to the internet at home. 74% have access in their own room. With this high figure, the Danish children occupy the first place in terms of access to the Internet.
- 39% of Danish children go online via their mobile phone or other mobile platforms. This is somewhat lower than in neighbouring countries such as Norway (50%) & Sweden (48%)
- Danish children are, on average, seven years old when they start using the Internet. The European average is nine years old.
- 81% of the Danish children who use the Internet go online every day. The frequency increases with age. Only 3% are online less frequently than once a week. The competencies of Danish children using the Internet and digital media are slightly above the European average. Danish children most often have parents who are also online on a daily basis.
- The study also found that Danish children are relatively critical of the Internet. This indicates that extensive Internet use does not automatically imply an uncritical attitude among children and young people.
- 75% of Danish young people have a profile on a social networking site such as Facebook.
- Denmark holds the record when it comes to children having negative online experiences. 15% of parents and 28% of children report that they have negative experiences on the web. A staggering 94% of Danish children say that there are things online that may bother children their age while the European average is 55%. Since 'only' 28% have had negative experiences, the high figure for Denmark reflects a critical understanding of the risks that are also associated with the use of online services.
- The study suggests that age, background and gender play a role in relation to access, use and attitudes to ICT and digital media.

ICT in youth work

Danish children and young people frequently use digital media in their daily lives. Services and projects working with children and young people are also using the internet more. A survey conducted for the Danish Agency for Digitisation and the National Board of Social Services, which has involved 374 day care facilities, suggests that the use of ICT and digital media in day care is growing in Denmark:

- The survey shows that as many as 75% are using one or more digital tools in their work.
- Between 25% and 40% of managers experience that the use of digital media is promoting dialogue with parents and providing flexibility for employees and parents.
- 50% of the day care facilities indicate that they experience significant learning effects including the development of social and personal competences among the children.

The report also shows that children develop a sense of democracy and participation through the inclusion of digital media. The survey however also points out that there is a general lack of knowledge about the opportunities that exist in terms of supporting children's development and learning through digital tools.

Methodology

The desk research, as highlighted above, provides an overview of youth work in Denmark and how it is organised in relation to the state, local authorities and voluntary and private associations. This presents a picture of the context in which youth work is delivered within Denmark, it covers a wide range of organisations who work with children and young people.

Questionnaire: Electronic questionnaires were sent to several municipalities as well as private and public institutions. 125 responses were received. Respondents were a mix of people from the public and private sector – the majority being professionals employed in the public sector which represents 86% of total responses. Respondents were mainly working within the informal part of the youth sector and cover a wide range of work areas in the youth field - the majority from a counselling and guidance background while some others work at after school care facilities (SFOs), drop-in centres, shelters and other youth centres.

Focus Groups: Three focus group interviews were conducted with 5-6 participants in each. All the participants were civil servants within educational and social youth work. The focus groups therefore only provide insight into the use of ICT and digital and social media in the public sector. Two further focus groups were conducted with young people (findings from these can be read in the full report from Denmark which is available on the Screenagers webpage).

Case Studies: Three case studies have been highlighted which depict how the media and ICT can be used in youth work – both in innovative ways and in more established working practices. The case studies describe the work of Coding Pirates, Nursery and kindergarten use of ICT and digital media and Cyberhus.dk.

Key Survey Findings

Extent, purpose and value of the use of social and digital media in youth work

Social media

More than half of the respondents are using social media. Of the total number of 125 responses, 75 respondents are using social media whereas 50 are not.

What social media do you use?
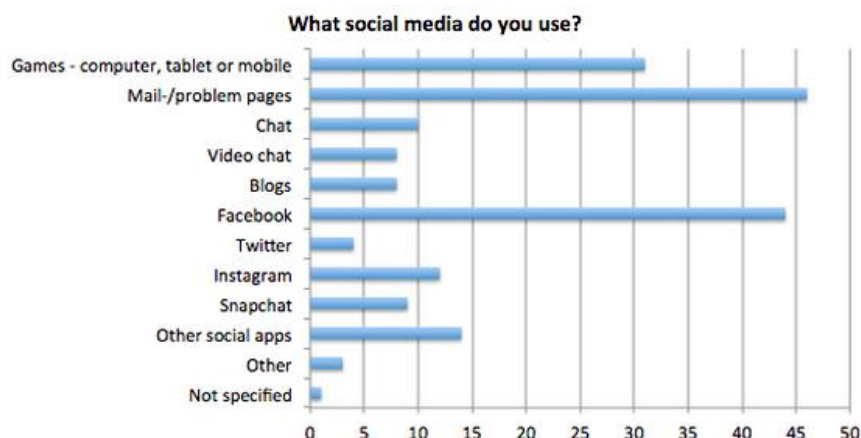
Within educational and social work, mail/problem pages, Facebook and games are the most commonly used social media.

41% of the respondents, who make use of social media, play games of various kinds – either in the direct work with young people or as part of the professionals' activities with the young people.
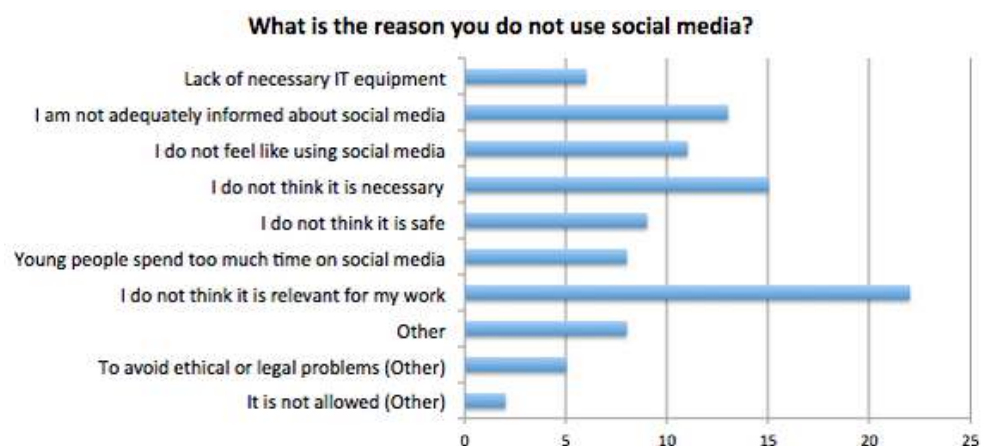
Both Facebook and mail/problem page systems are largely used for communication and information purposes, and to create or send out reminders about conversations. Other media, which require a higher degree of interaction and involvement, such as chat and video conversation, are not used to the same extent. The media being employed a lot by young people – such as Instagram and Snapchat – are not particularly prominent, with only a small percentage of survey respondents who are using these.

For what purpose do you use social media?
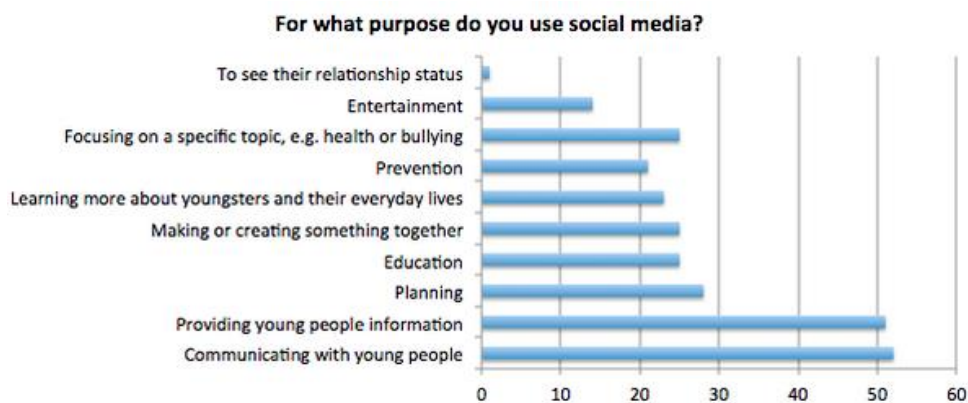
It is clear that professionals tend to use them in order to communicate, inform and present information with 'conversation' and 'information' topping the list. The classic and traditional forms of interaction and tasks that have always been part of their work have moved from being e.g. a phone call to taking place via social media and other communication channels.

Almost a third of the respondents use social media to learn about the young people and their everyday lives. Social media helps to give them an opportunity to get insights into the everyday activities of young people, their existence, relationships and the lives of young people in general. This particular use of social media is more active and specifically aimed at each young person and his/her whereabouts, compared to using social media to schedule consultations and the like.

44% of respondents do not use social media in their work and the chart below shows their reasons for this.

What is the reason you do not use social media?

Reason	Value
Lack of necessary IT equipment	6
I am not adequately informed about social media	13
I do not feel like using social media	11
I do not think it is necessary	15
I do not think it is safe	9
Young people spend too much time on social media	8
I do not think it is relevant for my work	22
Other	8
To avoid ethical or legal problems (Other)	5
It is not allowed (Other)	2

ICT and digital media

The survey shows that 94% of all respondents use ICT and digital media in their daily work with children and young people. The small amount of no-responses indicates that ICT is a major part of the work with children and young people in Denmark and is also an applied tool for documentation and communication with the individual or within a personnel group.

What kinds of IT and digital media do you use?

Type	Value
Computer	110
Tablet	65
Mobile	98
Word editing programs	72
Intranet	75
Projector	62
Games - e.g., Playstation, Wii	28
Software for text editing, web development and so forth	22
Various types of technology	24
Software for programming	7
Equipment for taking pictures or video recording	55
Equipment for recording sound or music	55
Editing software for music, images, or video	31
E-books	20

The types of ICT most commonly used are tools and programmes such as Computer, tablet, mobile and intranet. There is a small number of people using ICT for programming purposes.

Counselling and guidance are two of the most common activities within ICT and media, and this corresponds with being the task handled by most respondents.

While 31% of the respondents are using social media to learn about the young people and their everyday lives, no-one is using ICT and digital media for this purpose. Some are using ICT and digital media to focus on teaching the young people how to use these channels and tools – almost 45 of the 125 respondents are focusing on this topic.

Only 6% of all respondents do not use ICT and digital media in their work. According to the respondents, the two main reasons for not using ICT and digital media are that it is not necessary for their work, and that it makes no sense for their tasks. Half of those respondents indicate that they do not use ICT and digital media because they do not deem it necessary for their work.

Contribution and value of social and digital media

In the use of ICT and digital and social media, two aspects are regarded as most valuable by the respondents. ICT and media make it easier for them to i) provide information and ii) get in touch with the young people.

ICT and media are thus two factors that generally contribute towards streamlining and optimising the workflows of the respondents. Information sharing does not appear to be a factor that only applies in the actual work with young people. It may also be information internally at the workplace, or with other institutions.

However, about 50 respondents say that ICT and media have the potential to provide an opportunity to get in contact with children and young people who they normally have no contact with.

About a third of respondents believe that ICT and media can offer new opportunities in connection to their work; among other things, the young people will get a chance to create something (e.g. through games which many of the respondents are making use of).

As many as 79% of respondents indicate that they consider ICT and media as valuable and efficient tools in their work. In particular, it is emphasised that ICT and media create new opportunities for communication, counselling and contact with the young people. It creates new ways of expression, both for the professionals and the young people.

The survey indicates that ICT and digital and social media are deemed to be effective and practical, as it is an easy way to get in touch with the young people and give them information as well as plan activities. 12% of respondents indicate that ICT and media are time-consuming compared to other tasks, but that they can also contribute with positive aspects.

Challenges

Most respondents chose the following two answers; that it is not being evaluated (40%) and that it is being evaluated orally (40%), indicating that evaluation is not a matter of course at all workplaces.

What challenges do you encounter by using IT and digital media in your work?
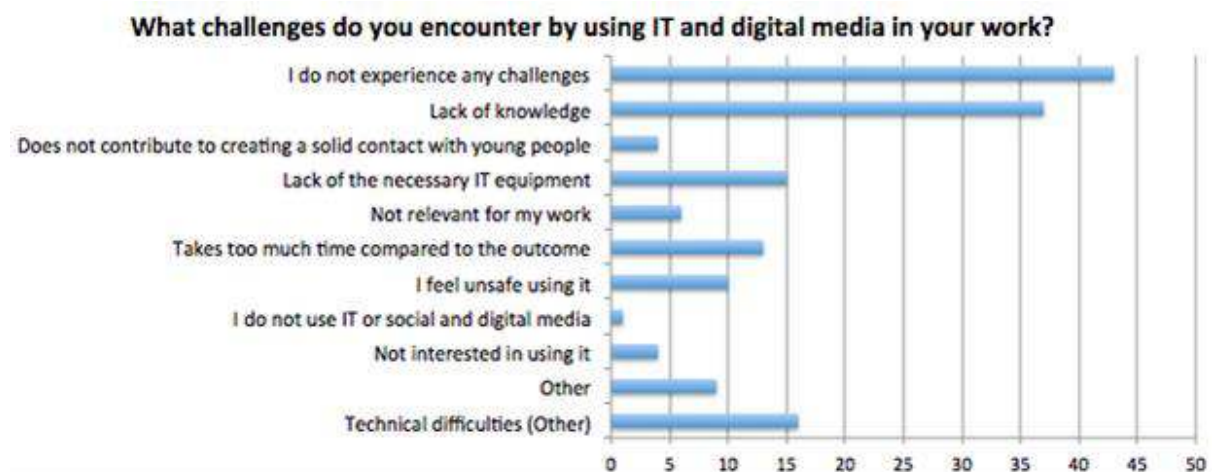
A major challenge among the respondents is the feeling of not having enough knowledge of ICT and digital media. In addition, technical difficulties and lack of ICT equipment is also a problem. 10 respondents feel unsafe using ICT and digital media in their work.

Training

Nearly two-thirds (78) of the respondents indicate that they are aware of training in the use of ICT and digital and social media. However, only about one third (46) of the respondents say that they have received training in the use of ICT and digital and social media.

Of the 46 indicating that they have received training within the area, about 74% say that they have attended a training course while about 46% say that they have received a presentation on the topic. Only 4 (9%) say that they have received internal training within the area and even fewer (3), representing 7%, have completed education within the field. 22% (10) indicate that they have received online training within the area.

Discussion with colleagues (82%) is cited as other measures for inspiration in using ICT and digital media in their work. Furthermore, the respondents also retrieve information from the Internet and books (58%). Only 7% say that they do not deem it relevant or necessary, while 12% believe that they have acquired enough knowledge through training.

Some of the responses describe how more knowledge in the field is necessary. Increased knowledge would mean that the use of ICT and digital and social media would not necessarily be a time-consuming process but a constructive and useful tool.

Key points from focus groups

Attitudes to the use of ICT and digital and social media: Most respondents agreed that ICT and media can serve as valuable supporting tools in educational work. If ICT is to be used meaningfully in educational work it seems necessary to create an implementation strategy, as these are complex tools that require a prolonged learning process in order to use them. Generally, the attitude of the focus groups is that ICT contributes a lot of value – in particular, easy and effective communication. Documentation and filing also become easier and ICT and media can make it easier for students with various difficulties to receive education.

Others believe, however, that something gets lost in the use of ICT and media. One concern is that you eventually cannot do without it. One psychotherapist does not believe that ICT and media are compatible with his work values, and the way he thinks people should be together. He believes that children and young people are so preoccupied with their phones and computers that it becomes their whole lifeworld, and that they thus lose touch with themselves. One of the challenges particularly emphasised in the focus groups is the fact that the use of ICT in the workplace can be unreliable, one respondent highlighted the delays which can be caused if systems crash and prevent work continuing.

Use of ICT can depend on the worker's own initiative and drive. They need to find their own Introductory courses etc., which are not being organised for them. There can also be a generation gap with older colleagues, who are used to other methods or approaches. There is a greater need for introductory training in the implementation of ICT and media in the work where employees can gain practical experience and tools to use the media.

Use of ICT: For most respondents, there is a general tendency to use SMS services, contact by telephone and email are preferred forms of communication. The benefit of using social media is that it saves time, makes the process easier and more vivid for everyone involved. Some of the respondents, however, express no clear positive attitude to the use of social media. They say that it is not always appropriate to use social media in their work if children and young people are seeking help and want to remain anonymous.

Use of Snapchat, apps and Facebook: Workers expressed awareness of the risk of using these tools and recognised the importance of not mixing private life with work life. However, their use can help obtain more knowledge about the young person for discussion in counselling. Several participants like to use apps as a way to give the young people tools to handle their everyday life. It can be meditation apps, pictogram apps, apps for meal planning etc.

One of the respondents working in an open counselling service for young people for a municipal had expressed a desire to create a Facebook page, along with his department, but this had been rejected by the municipality. Generally, there are different opinions about the usefulness of Facebook for work with children and young people. Some believe that the disadvantage of Facebook is that it prevents the young person from being anonymous. However, others are happy to use Facebook as they believe it is an effective way to distribute information to young people about certain activities bearing in mind that there must be clear rules for that page which is used as a one-way communication channel in order to protect the young people's privacy.

Observations of young people: Young people lack information about online ethics and conduct on digital and social media platforms. It should be compulsory in primary schools to introduce students to ICT and media, including digital behaviour. Some schools create FabLabs , others rely on "De 32" (The 32). It is also regularly noted that there is a need to do something politically in order to create clarity about the rules, so that teachers and other educational personnel know what they can and cannot do.

According to the respondents, there is also a cultural aspect of ICT. It is necessary to have good manners and morals on the Internet as well. The participants, who are qualified teachers, stress the importance that their students obtain a self-consciousness about their online activities. The question was raised around who would actually teach young people these rules and expectations.

Recommendations

1. **Upgrading of pedagogical employees**
   The case studies, the survey and the focus groups have made it evident that an upgrading of skills among professionals is necessary in order for ICT and media to gain a foothold in educational and social work. It is crucial that it does not turn into sole projects where only passionate activists become the driving force.

2. **Municipalities must establish clear and detailed strategies for the digital pedagogical work**
   The professionals must be introduced to the different tools depending on the purpose. There is also a need for generally applicable efforts at the workplace and it is important to devise an ICT strategy, both for municipal and private organisation, with respect to implementation, training, educational practices as well as ethical and legal aspects.

3. **Increased dialogue with vulnerable children and young people about their use of the Internet**
   It is very important to be critical of the use of ICT and media in the professionals' works and reflect on the conducted selection and deselection which also applies to young people. It is important that children and young people are aware of their digital identity and how they relate to their behaviour on the internet.

4. **Access to rapid network connections and new technology must be upgraded**
   On a completely low-practical level, the work with ICT and media also requires enough available equipment and that the equipment in question works.

5

AUSTRIA

5. Austria

The following chapter draws on extracts from the Austrian national report, including a brief overview of the youth service and ICT context, some of the key findings from survey and focus groups, and recommendations. The full report is available to download on the Screenagers webpage.

Background to the organisation

wienXtra is a non governmental organisation which works for the city of Vienna and co-operates closely with the youth section of Municipal Department 13. wienXtra offers a wide range of services to families, children and young people: recreational and cultural activities, advice and information, and basic and advanced training for youth workers, Among its services is the media centre wienXtra –mefienzentrum, which specialises in media education in youth work institutions and schools and provides training for youth workers on issues of media education.

An overview of youth work and youth services in Austria

The *Federal Ministry of Family and Youth (BMJF)* defines the term "extra-curricular child and youth work" as leisure-time activities, however it is also directed to informal and non-formal learning processes of adolescents during after-school hours.

In Austria, extra-curricular child and youth work on municipal, state and federal levels is subjected to different political and legal framework conditions. On a federal level, youth agendas are inter-departmental cross-sectoral issues. General issues and their coordination lie with the *Federal Ministry for Family and Youth (BMFJ)*. Designing extra-curricular child and youth work on federal state level is under the responsibility of members of the provincial government and their administrative advisors on youth. Municipalities, which are the immediate living environment of children and young adults, also play an important role in shaping child and youth work and in creating infrastructures.

Austria began developing a national youth strategy in 2012 in order to generate more visibility for all activities for young adults throughout all political fields as well as turning extra-curricular youth work into one pillar of youth politics. The *Austrian youth strategy* is an ongoing process for strengthening and developing youth policies through active engagement with young adults in order to identify issues and fields of action: *employment and learning*, *participation and initiative* and *quality of life and spirit of cooperation* were selected as the main topics.

Three pillars of youth work in Austria

- **Open youth work:** combines social work, educational work, cultural work and health promotion within its offers, and represents an important place for socialisation for young people in Austria in youth centres, youth cafés as well as throughout public space (mobile youth work). *The Federal Network for Open Youth Work (bOJA)* acts as a centre of excellence for open youth work in Austria, and serves as a networking and service facility for around 400 carrier institutions of open child and youth work.
- **Youth information:** In total, there are 27 youth information facilities throughout Austria offering drop-in services for young people and providing counselling with regards to life issues. *The Federal Network for Austrian Youth Information* acts as the networking basis on national as well as on international levels.
- **Youth work associations:** There are more than 50 organisations for confessional, cultural, ecological and party-political youth work as well as youth sports' associations etc., that are consolidated within the *Federal Youth Agency (Bundesjugendvertretung; BJV)*. Organisations of associated youth work reach out to around 1.5 million young people under the age of 30. Additionally, the *BJV* is the legitimate special interest group for all children and adolescents in Austria.

ICT Context

To the *BMFJ*, media competencies are an important field of action. By creating *Medien-Jugend-Info* (media-youth-info), a service facility was provided in order to impart and foster media competencies to young adults and parents through offering information and workshops etc. Another crucial building block is the *Federal Office for the Positive Assessment of Computer and Console Games (BuPP)* which manages information regarding digital games and is compiling a recommendation list of valuable games in order to offer pedagogues and parents an orientation guide for purchasing games.

In an online survey of 2012, young people were asked about issues and topics in which they would wish for a stronger voice, and 20% of young adults questioned stated the issue of "media". In line with the youth strategy, a pool of measures for improving media-related competencies was compiled, containing projects for internet use in order to support access to the labour market.

On a federal level, Meral Akin-Hecke was appointed *Digital Champion Austria* during the *Digital Agenda for Europe* in 2013 in order to raise awareness of the importance of digital media competencies. *digi4family* is an initiative by the *BMFJ* and the *Professional Association of Management Consultancy and Information Technology* of the *Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO)* with the aim of increasing media competencies of families, supported by *SaferInternet.at* and *werdedigital.at*. This set of measures is directed to young adults as well as to parents, grandparents and multipliers and is offering webinars and further information on media-related topics.

In 2015, the *Austrian Federal Council* initiated a public consultation in relation to "digital change" and how legislation should react to it. It aims at expanding skills in this field and to compile a Green Paper entitled "Digital Change and Politics".

Use of ICT by young people

Every four years, a *Youth Report* commissioned by the *BMFJ* is published. The last edition was presented in 2011, in which the importance of media for young adults was highlighted and media as well as peer groups were identified as substantial elements for developing one's own system of values

Media usage behaviour of young adults in Upper Austria aged between 11 and 18 has been monitored by the *Education Group GmbH* within the *Youth-Media-Study of Upper Austria* since 2009 and serves as a benchmark value for Austria. From an adolescent's point of view, the smart phone has emerged to be an indispensable companion. Having access to a computer is taken for granted, however meeting friends in real life remains the most essential leisure-time activity. Communicating about media-related topics also plays an important role. Parents express their wish for better media competencies. This goes hand in hand with the observation that the impact of media on family life is increasing and parents worry more about their children's internet use. It's also a central issue for pedagogues.

In 2015, the *Institute of Youth Culture Research* conducted the *Youth Study Burgenland 2015* commissioned by the *Administrative Youth Advisory Board* (Landesjugendreferat) *Burgenland*, in which media were assigned a big role as part of young life worlds. Online-communication is a constant part of leisure-time activities, but it's not a contradiction to offline-communication.

Methodology

The online survey of youth workers was conducted throughout Austria, while case studies and focus groups were limited to Vienna. This was a purely pragmatic decision and does not negate the existence of a lively and diverse media-pedagogical practice in other federal states.

Online Survey: The comprehensive survey consisted of 31 questions and was accessible from the beginning of May until the end of June 2015. It was distributed through a wide range of youth work networks. 147 workers responded.

<u>Focus Groups:</u> Three focus groups with a total of 18 participants were facilitated. They involved staff from Kiddy & co, 5erhaus and managers representing larger youth work associations in Vienna.

<u>Case Studies:</u> Four case studies were compiled. Due to limit of space only 3 have been included in the summary report, but all can be read in the full report (available on the Screenagers webpage).

<u>Input from young people:</u> 2 young people's focus groups with a total of 8 young people were facilitated. Findings from these can be read in the full report.

Key survey findings

Extent, purpose and value of the use of social and digital media in youth work

Equipment used by participants at work for individual or shared use are computers or laptops (90%) and internet access (93%), a video projector/beamer (78%), Wifi (78%) and audio replay devices (sound system, boom box) (86%). Popular digital entertainment devices like games consoles only make up 44% of equipment due to highly variable work spaces and responsibilities of youth workers.

Nearly one in three (32%) respondents stated that they used their own private smart phone for work. Other privately-owned devices that are brought into work are cameras (13%), audio recording devices (11%), computer/laptop (9%), tablets (7%) and video cameras (5%).

In use on a daily basis are internet access (90%), computer or laptop (84%) as well as mobile phones (37%) or smart phones (43%) and cameras (10% use it at work on a daily basis, a further 40% every other week). Tablets in youth work only seem to be an evolving trend, nearly one in three (31%) have access to a tablet at work, however only 17% use it daily or weekly.

The following tables outline responses in relation to breadth and frequency of social and digital media usage and its purpose.
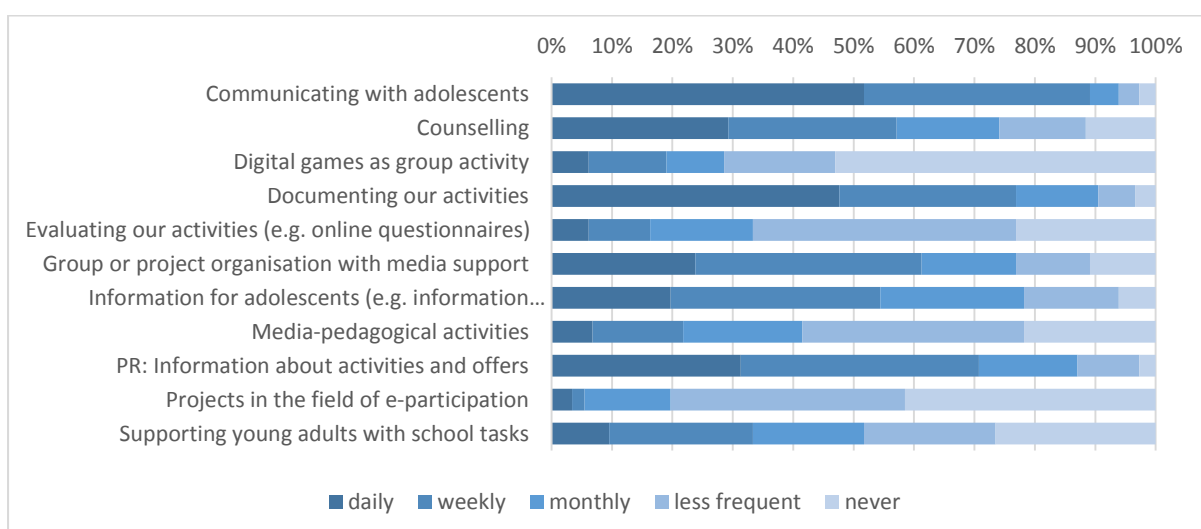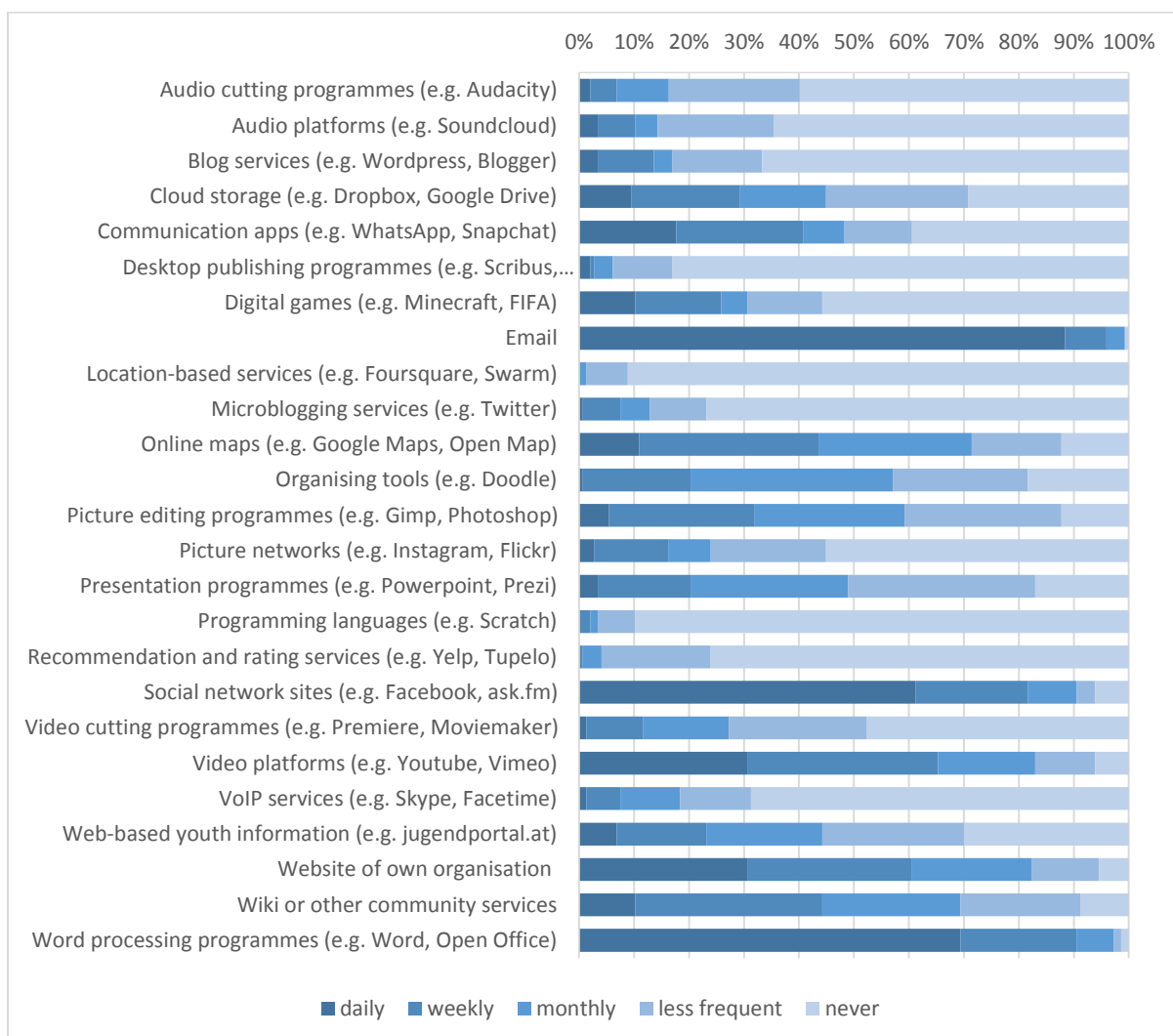
In relation to media competency 18% of respondents graded themselves as 'satisfactory', 40% 'good' and 35%' proficient' skills. Respondents also graded themselves satisfactory or proficient in relation to young internet culture (86%), photography and picture editing (83%), media analysis and critique (78%), media and copyright law (79%) or online security (88%).

It was acknowledged by 69% of respondents that media is an essential part of teenage life and therefore youth work also should engage with media.

Participants cited positive developments in social and digital media as positive feedback by adolescents on media-related activities (23%), having time to engage with media (20%), the fact that one's own organisation values and supports the use of media (20%), using media is incorporated within the organisation's core concept (22%) and that there was the possibility for further training on the subject (20%).

## Value and contribution of social and digital media

Only 7 participants (5%) stated that there were no beneficial factors, they claimed that the use of media was not being supported over the last few years. A quarter of participants thought that they were not assigning enough working time to using digital media. All the others found the extent to be adequate. Nobody felt that they were dedicating too much time to digital media.

80% of respondents felt meeting adolescents online may be valuable to some participants, however this does not substitute for offline contact. 95% of study participants generally agreed youth work needs to engage with digital media in order to keep track of a young person's world in which media plays a strong role. Furthermore, they highlight the potential of digital media as enhancing youth work methods (92%), its use offers attractive activities (84%) and communication with adolescents is done in contemporary ways (81%).

Other benefits of social and digital media were cited as; it creates the possibility to speak out and offers public spaces for topics and concerns of young adults (88%); adolescents discover a new course of action in relation with media (86%); youth work can compensate for situations in which young adults are left alone with their acting and dealing with media by their families (74%).

Training Needs

The following table highlights the areas in which youth workers would want to acquire additional skills.
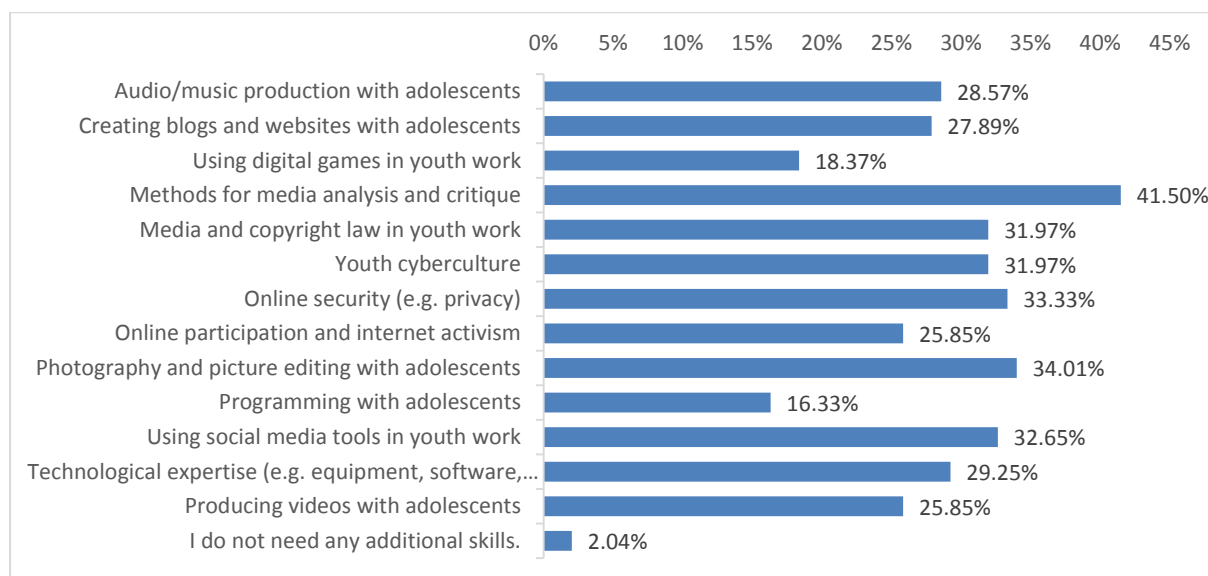
Although participants assessed their own skills in many areas positively, the interest in learning more is considerably high. Participants want to acquire additional skills in the areas of 'media critique – media analysis'. Interest in developing skills in digital games and programming (coding) was relatively small.

The support needed is recorded in the table below:
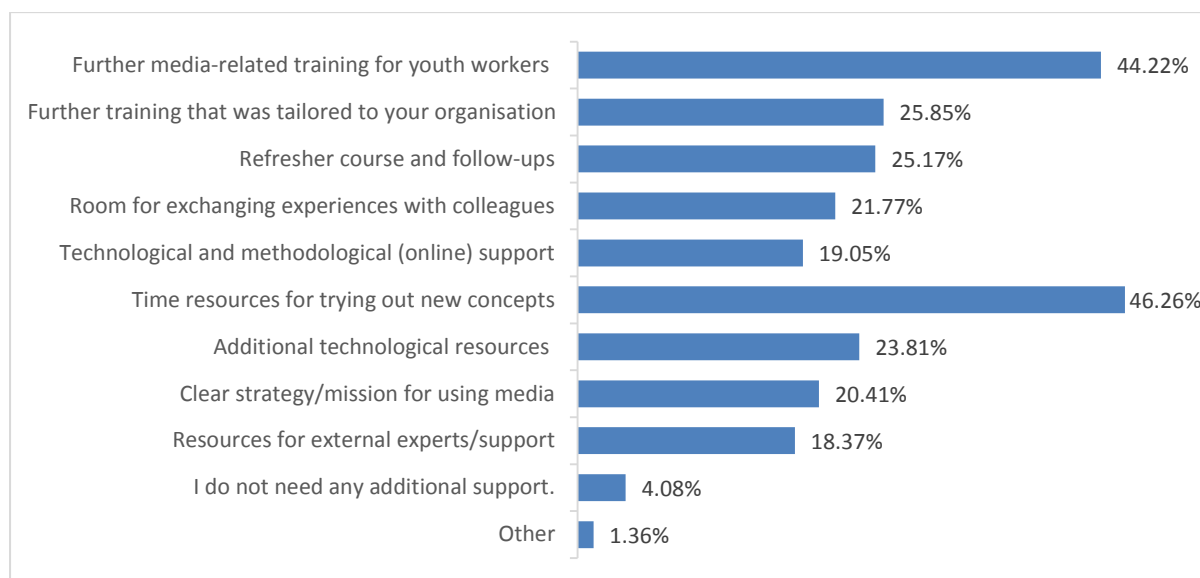
Self-learning processes are important for youth workers when it comes to skills concerning digital media – the same goes for adolescents themselves. Even stronger than the wish for further training on media-related topics (44%) is the study participants' desire for more time resources, to be able to try new things (e.g. equipment, programmes, methods) (46%). Moreover, further training courses that were tailored to their own organisations were ranked high on the wish list (26%), followed by refresher courses and follow-ups (25%) as well as additional technological resources (24%). In this question, participants could choose three supporting structures that they would wish for. Only 6 participants (4%) stated that they didn't need any additional support.

Challenges

18% of all participants mentioned a lack of a technological infrastructure, 10% simply do not have the time. 41% said that youth workers were lacking expertise. 32% were of the opinion that the working hours of youth workers would not suffice for the use of media, a further 32% listed concerns regarding data protection and an uncertain legal situation in general as obstacles.

The time factor involved in managing social media is something that can be an obstacle. Social media is' like a field of its own'. There was a concern that face to face work must continue to come first, digital media should not replace face to face work.

Another concern which is still apparent is having access to digital media. This might be surprising given the relatively strong implementation of digital devices in private homes. 64% of all study participants stated that youth work could compensate for a private surrounding in which adolescents only have limited access to digital media.

Key points from focus groups

Although most of the young people have access to a computer and the internet at home, the possibility of using the internet at the youth club still remains attractive to them. Young people use the youth provision to play browser games, to use social media or to finish homework for school.

The focus groups identified considerable differences between girls and boys. Once a week, *Kiddy & Co's* internet café turns into a girls-only zone where specific issues can be discussed such as sending photos over the internet. One observation was that boys share videos and connect with each other in games and girls tend to use it more for communication. Some youth workers felt boys place more importance on showing "what they can do" with girls on the other hand use selfies to show the world "who they are".

*S*ocial networking sites present issues which require constant discussion with adolescents, most of all Facebook around data security. Staff members are addressing young people pre-emptively when they get the impression that those kids are presenting themselves in a way that could be harmful to them.

The level of support that young people receive from their parents in media-related fields is perceived by the youth workers as varying but generally not enough. It very much depends on an existing relationship of trust when it comes to the question whether or not teenagers need and seek adult advice with media-related topics. Youth work is a place of exploration for young adults and this has a huge impact on media related learning. An attitude that encourages trust and interpersonal work outside of authoritarian surroundings, which are both quality features of youth work, create good ground work for discussions about media with adolescents. Most learning around social and digital media seems to happen through peers.

One of the potential strengths of youth work in the field of media is supporting children and young adults individually and according to their needs and wishes, and youth workers can encourage children to build skills, self-confidence and knowledge by working with various media channels.There are regular gaming days scheduled at the *Kiddy & Co* kids' and youth clubs which are very attractive to the target group – irrespective of whether there's a games console at home or not.

What would be even more important is a networking platform where youth workers could exchange experiences and opinions about media-related topics with members of other institutions.

Those involved wish that their co-workers would show willingness to engage in digital media worlds of young adults, however they do assert that this is not a question of age but a question of attitude.

Recommendations

1. Not all young people have the same level of competency in social and digital media. Young people require differentiated and need-oriented support of digital media skills.

Study results contradict the image of adolescents as one uniform crowd consisting of "digital natives" who already possess all the competences which are required for equal participation in a digital society. Instead, they highlight the demand for differentiated and need-oriented support of digital media skills.

2. There is a need to strengthen adolescents' reflective, critical and analytical media skills.

We should put particular emphasis on how to strengthen adolescents' critical and analytical skills. Here, pilot schemes are required which develop methodical approaches suitable for youth work and also put them to the test. Media critique and analysis with young adults was also identified as one area with the biggest training backlog in youth workers.

3. Youth work's USP should be recognised as trustful relationships and closeness to the media-related lifeworlds of young people

Youth workers as adult guardians have the potential of taking a special position in media-reflexive and orientation processes of young adults. On one hand, because they are often believed to work closer to and with the media-related life worlds of adolescents (compared to other adult figures, parents or teachers). On the other hand, youth workers often enjoy a high level of trust. From that, another argument in favour of the importance of relationship work can be derived: effective, media-pedagogical interventions require existing mutual trust. From a pan-social point of view, youth work can offer a major contribution towards digital media skill support by potentially reaching even some of those adolescents, albeit not all of them, who are not (sufficiently) supported at home or by formal education systems (compared to schools).

4. Focus on low threshold approaches embedded in everyday work

To equalise the support of digital media skills in youth work only through selective media projects is not enough. Media projects can do so much; they can expand the scope of possible actions in relation to media in everyone involved or they can boost self-worth through a sense of achievement. However it could well be the case that youth work will show its biggest efficiency through continuous engagement with media-related topics in everyday encounters with adolescents.

5. Youth workers need to live up to their media-educational responsibilities: training, time to engage with media and opportunities for professional exchange

One needs to ascertain that media skills/media education is given sufficient significance in youth workers' basic training.

Among areas of action of active/action-based media work, especially digital games seem to be an expandable area in which there lies great potential for youth work. Currently, youth work is only very marginally touching the field of coding/programming – methods and approaches that also work well within the context of youth work, are still under development for the most part. Also, the wealth of possibilities of using tablets in low-threshold, quick media work don't seem to be fully appreciated yet.

6

NORTHERN IRELAND

6. Northern Ireland

The following chapter draws on extracts from the Northern Irish national report, including a brief overview of the youth service and ICT context, some of the key findings from survey and focus groups, and recommendations. The full report is available to download on the Screenagers webpage.

Background to the organisation

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland was established in 1990 with statutory functions relating to the development of the youth service. Its functions include funding regional voluntary youth organisations, supporting the training of youth workers, international youth work, community relations, and policy and research. As part of its funding remit in 2014-5, YCNI supported 14 regional organisations to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT in youth work.

An overview of youth work and youth services in Northern Ireland

The Youth Service in Northern Ireland comprises a statutory sector and a much larger voluntary sector. There are over 1800 registered youth service providers, supported by a workforce of 23,510, of whom over 90% are volunteers. Uniformed groups (eg. Scouts, Girls Brigade etc.) make up over 50% of the total number of youth groups.

Within the voluntary sector there are 1710 facilities engaging with a total of 132,678 young people aged 4-25. Within the statutory sector there are 97 facilities engaging with 13,761. 38% of all 4-18 year olds in Northern Ireland participate in some form of group/unit provision. In addition to the group/unit based provision, there is non-unit provision across the voluntary and statutory sectors, including area projects, detached youth work, summer activities, Irish medium youth work, Award schemes etc.

The composition of youth groups which are registered with the Education Authority NI is as follows:

		Count of groups	Membership totals	Percent of Membership
Statutory	Statutory (Controlled)	97	13,761	9.4%
Voluntary	Church based (vol)	328	30,880	21.1%
	Community (vol)	373	44,707	30.5%
	Uniformed	979	55,402	37.8%
	Other	32	1689	1.2%
	Total	**1,809**	**146,439**	**100.0%**

Whilst government Departments such as Health, Justice and Employment, provide some funding to youth services, the main funder for the sector is the Department of Education (DE). This is reflective of the distinctly educational purpose and process of youth work in Northern Ireland. In 2013 DE introduced a new policy for the sector entitled 'Priorities for Youth', which closely aligns youth work with education priorities. The policy also places greater emphasis on the targeting of services for young people in need of additional support, and identifies a priority age range as 11-18 (although the wider age range of 4-25 remains) The strategic aims of youth work within education are identified in the policy as :

-To contribute to raising standards for all and closing the performance gap between the highest and lowest achieving young people by providing access to enjoyable, non-formal learning opportunities that help them to develop enhanced social and cognitive skills and overcome barriers to learning, and

-To continue to improve the non-formal learning environment by creating inclusive, participative settings in which the voice and influence of young people are championed, supported and evident in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes.

ICT context

ICT is a crucial feature of formal education in Northern Ireland, whether this be as a taught subject, as a mandatory theme of the revised curriculum, or as a pedagogic tool (eg virtual learning environments). There has been significant investment by the Department of Education in a regional project called **Classroom 2000** (commonly referred to as **C2K**) to support ICT infrastructure and related teaching practice. Since 2000 over half a billion pounds has been invested in C2K (excluding investment from schools themselves).

Within the non formal education sector (youth work) several voluntary youth organisations have pioneered the innovative use of social and digital media in youth work in NI over the past two decades, and many providers across the voluntary and statutory sectors are now embedding ICT within their youth work programmes and communication strategies. However despite this rapid growth in the use of ICT within parts of the youth work sector, the lynchpins of policy support and financial investment enjoyed by schools have not been matched in the youth work sector, resulting in uneven and inconsistent practice across the service as a whole. There have been a number of opportunities over the past 10-15 years to promote and develop the use of ICT in a more strategic and sustainable way across non formal education, but these have largely failed to deliver sector-wide progression.

Some facts and figures about young people and social/digital media

  - A survey of 745 teenagers (age 15-16) from across NI found that a third spend 4+ hours per day online, with social networking being the most popular online activity, followed by watching videos and accessing information .   99% have at least one computer at home, 96% a mobile phone, 78% a games console, and 64% a tablet
  - Northern Ireland has the highest availability of fibre broadband services in the UK, and 95% of homes are served by Next Generation Networks (compared to 78% for the UK)
  - A survey of 11 year olds from across Northern Ireland found 13% had been bullied through text messages or online
  - Compared to other EU countries, the UK ranks 11th out of 25 for child digital literacy and e-safety skills
  - Across the UK young people aged 16-25 are likely to spend more time online than watching television
  - Young people are overwhelmingly positive about technology and the internet, with 75% stating they 'could not live without the internet'
  - 85% of 15-16 year olds in the UK have social networking profiles, with Facebook being the most popular. 37% have a media sharing platform (such as Instagram, Flickr)
  - A survey of 'online adults' (aged 16+) in NI found that Facebook and YouTube are equally used (65%) followed by WhatsApp (40%) and twitter (33%). There is increasing use of photo-based communications such as Pinterest (26%), Snapchat(14%) and Instagram (12%)

Methodology

Online surveys of youth workers   After piloting a draft questionnaire with youth workers, the decision was made to conduct two separate surveys i) a 28-item questionnaire aimed at youth workers in full time provision (defined for the purposes of this study as 20+ hours per week). This target population included voluntary and statutory youth centres, outreach and area workers, and those working in a 20+ hour capacity within regional voluntary organisations, and ii) a shorter questionnaire for youth workers (paid or voluntary) working in settings of less than 20 hours per week (referred to for the purposes of this report as 'part time'). This included part time youth centres, local clubs or groups, uniformed units, and other activities which engage young people for less than 20 hours per week. In total there were 169 responses to the online surveys (75 from 20+ hour provision, and 94 from part time provision). Findings from the two surveys were analysed and presented separately to show any variation between full and part time youth work settings.

Focus groups with youth workers Four focus groups were held with a total of 28 youth workers. Participants came from both statutory and voluntary settings, and from regional agencies and local youth groups. The focus groups lasted an hour and were audio-recorded.

Case studies of practice Four case studies were produced to provide more in-depth illustrations of front line practice. The case studies were selected from regional voluntary youth organisations funded through the Youth Council NI and were chosen to highlight the range and breadth of ICT as a tool for youth work.

Young people : To provide a young person's perspective, feedback was gained from 12 young project participants, with a focus on the outcomes and impact of participating in ICT projects.

Key survey findings

Social media   80% of respondents in full-time settings used some form of social media in their youth work compared to 68% of those in part-time settings. Facebook and YouTube were by far the most widely used, followed by Twitter to a lesser extent. 20% of respondents from the full-time sector did not use any form of social media in their youth work - all but two of these respondents were full-time youth workers employed within the statutory sector. The survey of part-time provision shows a considerably more limited use of social media, with under a fifth of all respondents not using any application other than Facebook.

The table below shows the purposes for which youth workers engage young people through social media. According to these results the most common purposes were for 'communication' and 'promotion of youth work activities' which applied to just over 60% of all respondents in the full-time sector. Furthermore, a significant proportion (approaching half of all respondents) use social media for the 'recruitment of young people' and for 'training and education purposes'. These results show a contrast with the much more limited application of social media in the part-time sector, particularly in regard to lobbying/campaigning and recruitment of young people.

For what purposes do you use social media in your youth work?

	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)
General communication with young people	60	67
Online Counselling	0	not asked
Lobbying / campaigning	32	7
Recruitment of young people	49	20
Training / education	42	not asked
Promotion of youth group activities	61	53
Bringing young people together in a virtual space	19	10

Digital media   89% of respondents from full time and 55% from part time provision had used some form of digital media in their youth work. The table below lists the use of digital media in youth work programmes and compares their use between respondents from full-time and part-time provision. Film-making and digital photography are among the most frequently occurring uses of digital media in youth work programmes among respondents from the full-time sector.   There are however other specialised uses of digital media, such as animation, graphic design and creative writing in which just under a fifth of full-time respondents involved in their youth work programmes. In contrast, digital photography is the only activity carried out by a significant proportion of youth work practitioners in the part-time sector (with a small amount of digital film and music production), and close to half the part-time respondents (45%) did not use digital media at all in their youth

work programmes. It is therefore clear that the use of digital media points to a much higher level of development within full-time provision.
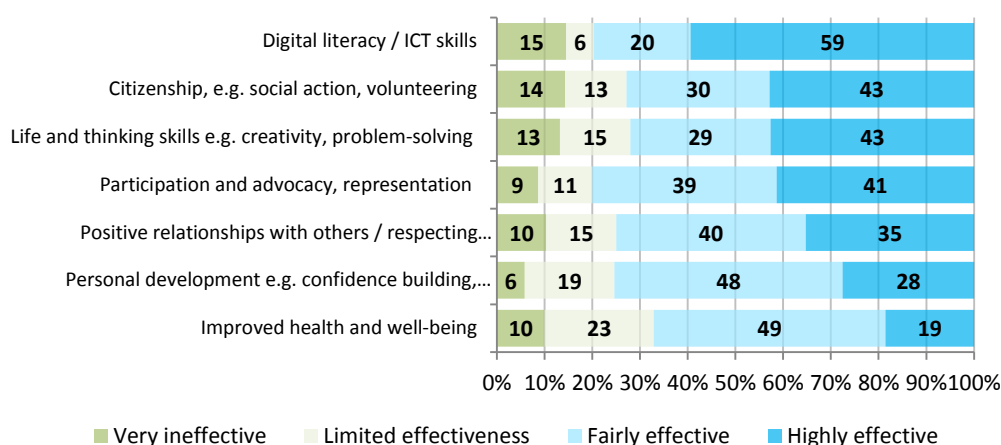
Over the past year, have you used any of the following digital media activities within your youth work programmes?

	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)
Film making	52	19
Digital music making	23	11
Digital photography	42	35
Digital animation	19	5
Graphic design	15	7
Gaming	14	7
Games design	1	4
Creative writing/digital booklets	17	6
Coding / programming	10	2
Website design	13	9

Value of ICT in supporting youth work outcomes

Survey respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the use of ICT in supporting youth work outcomes. The table below shows the responses from the survey of the full-time sector. Generally, respondents had a favourable experience of the effectiveness of digital and social media across key youth work outcomes although there was some considerable variation. Social and digital media was rated as highly effective by 43% in terms of supporting citizenship, life and thinking skills and participation and advocacy.

In your experience, how effective is digital/social media in supporting the following youth work outcomes FULL TIME (%)

Outcome	Very ineffective	Limited effectiveness	Fairly effective	Highly effective
Digital literacy / ICT skills	15	6	20	59
Citizenship, e.g. social action, volunteering	14	13	30	43
Life and thinking skills e.g. creativity, problem-solving	13	15	29	43
Participation and advocacy, representation	9	11	39	41
Positive relationships with others / respecting…	10	15	40	35
Personal development e.g. confidence building,…	6	19	48	28
Improved health and well-being	10	23	49	19

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Very ineffective   ■ Limited effectiveness   ■ Fairly effective   ■ Highly effective

Challenges

Based on their own youth work, survey respondents were asked indicate which barriers they faced in using social and digital media. The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly refuted any lack of interest on the part of young people (no respondents agreed that this was a barrier). Similarly, the age of young people they worked with, and doubts about the value of ICT to their youth work practice, were not viewed as barriers. Rather, concern about child protection, a lack of infrastructure, prohibitive costs and a lack of time within working hours (including being able to keep up to date on ICT developments) were ranked as the main barriers. Almost three-quarters of employers were perceived as being supportive, of which the majority were rated at the maximum level.

Training

Respondents were asked whether they had received training in digital/social media during the past two years (see table below). Levels of training appear to be low, particularly within the part-time sector where less of a fifth of all respondents have not taken any work-related training in social and digital media over the last two years. Of those who did undertake training, the vast majority had received only one session and 10% had two training sessions.

During the past two years, have you undertaken training in digital/social media during your working hours?

ICT Training in past 2 years?	Full time %	Part time %
Yes	37	18
No	63	82

Respondents were asked about their need for further training. Analysis found marked differences in perceptions between the full-time and part-time sectors (see table below). The vast majority of respondents from full time settings attached greater value to further training, whereas over one-third of part-time sector

respondents saw little or no value in further training. This may be a reflection of the more limited scope and restricted practice of social and digital media in part time settings.

Figure 2: Further training in ICT

■ Full-time (%)   ■ Part-time (%)
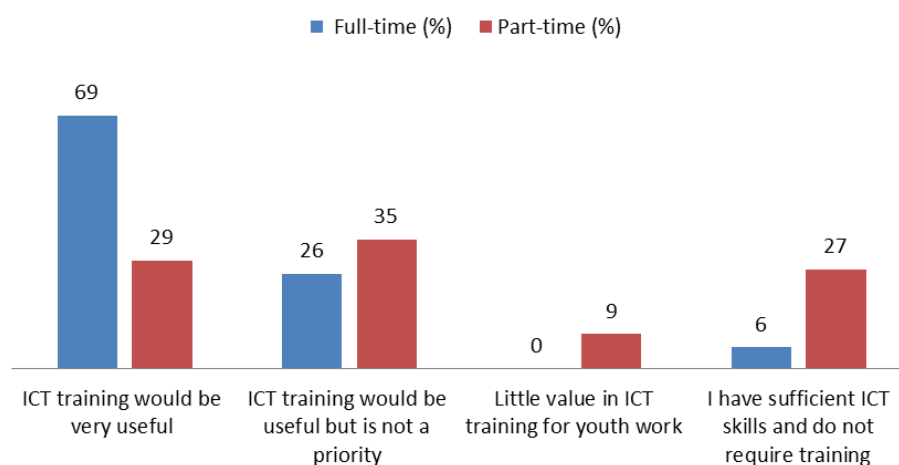
Respondents to the survey of the full-time sector were asked to evaluate their professional expertise in various aspects of ICT in their youth work practice. The area where respondents rated their expertise most positively was in ensuring online safety (68% rated as excellent or good) and using social media tools in youth work was rated positively by well over half of respondents (although only 13% perceived their practice to be excellent). Using the internet to support activism and participation was another area of proficiency with over a fifth rating their practice as excellent, and a further third rated as good. Areas of self-evaluated weakness included copyright issues, technical expertise (hardware and software) and the findings indicate a very clear need for support in the production of media (such as animation, video and music) and using digital games in youth work.

The overwhelming majority of respondents to both surveys anticipate that their use of social and digital media in youth work will increase (see table below).

Thinking of your work with young people over the coming three years, do you think the use of social/ digital media will increase, decrease, or stay the same?

	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)
Increase	86	86
Decrease	1	15
Stay same	13	0

Key points from focus groups

To supplement data from the online surveys, four focus groups were held with youth workers attending an ICT-themed 'Sharing the learning' event hosted at the Belfast Science Park in June 2015. The majority of those attending had personal experience of the use of digital media in their youth work, although distinct differences emerged between voluntary and statutory participants in terms of using social media in youth work. In total 28 youth workers took part in the focus groups, which lasted for an hour and were audio recorded.

Experiences of the use of social media as a youth work tool were markedly different between workers from the voluntary and statutory sectors. All participants from voluntary sector groups reported using a range of social media tools for a variety of purposes. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter were the most commonly mentioned, used primarily for:

- ✓ communication with membership
- ✓ recruitment of young people
- ✓ promotion of events and activities
- ✓ celebration and showcasing young people's achievements
- ✓ keeping parents/community informed about activities

Beyond these communication functions, participants described using social media to support the personal development and social education of young people, most particularly in the areas of citizenship, participation, self advocacy, health awareness, issue based work, diversity/inclusion and campaigning.

Use of social media in campaigning and citizenship

Several participants described using social media platforms and/or interactive web forums to support young people's participation, political engagement, engaging in debate about social issues, and lobbying. These examples often involved young people identifying issues of concern or interest to them and taking the lead role in contacting local councillors, non departmental public bodies, and members of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Examples were given where this initial social media contact led to face to face meetings with politicians and/or prolonged engagement with local councils.

Youth workers highlighted the immediacy of social media in supporting young people having a voice, and suggested that the visibility and accessibility of social media has served to 'narrow the gap' between young people and those in positions of power.

Use of social media to foster mutual understanding

Several participants specifically referred to the value of social media in breaking down barriers between young people and supporting a greater understanding of difference (this is particularly pertinent in the post-conflict context of Northern Ireland, where youth work continues to play an important role in reconciliation and community relations)

Social media in the statutory youth work sector

An issue which dominated all focus group discussion related to social media in statutory youth work settings. The widespread and often daily use of social media by voluntary sector participants contrasted sharply with those from statutory youth groups who are largely excluded from using social media, other than e-mail. Several participants highlighted that the source of these restrictions lay in the overarching policy within the statutory Education Authority, and not specifically with youth service management or youth service policy. However there was a strong sense that a rigid implementation of Safeguarding and Child protection policies in the statutory sector was proving counter-productive in a youth work context and that it failed to address the reality of young people's social media use.

Extent and purposes of using digital media in youth work

Participants described using a wide range of digital media within their youth work, including coding, podcasts, photography, music, film and animation. Digital media was primarily used :

- ✓ To support issue-based projects
- ✓ To support self advocacy, citizenship and campaigning
- ✓ As a basis for group work, especially with communities of interest and marginalised young people
- ✓ To provide opportunities for creativity and self-expression
- ✓ To support digital literacy and skills development

Although participants described using a variety of digital media, film-making was the most frequently mentioned, and was described as particularly popular with young people. Participants highlighted the versatility of this form of media which they felt lends itself perfectly to the youth work process. Examples were given of how the filmmaking process - from initial planning stages, scriptwriting, filming, to production and promotion - enabled young people to develop their team-working skills, their creativity, and to take an active role in decision making. The film-making process and end-product combined to give young people a powerful sense of achievement. Several participants highlighted that the use of digital film making was also particularly valuable in working inclusively and in enabling marginalised young people or those from communities of interest to identify and work on issues which impacted them.

Many participants described how the young people they work with are enthused by projects based on social/digital media, that multimedia was seen by young people as a 'fun' way to work on issues and projects, and that ICT-based projects could motivate and engage young people who would ordinarily be reluctant to take part in group work or to express a view

Compatibility with the youth work curriculum

Many participants referred to technology as a ' tool',' vehicle' or' enabler' for effective youth work, rather than an end in itself. Learning to use media was seen as the pull or attraction for young people, but participants suggested that the value was less about building technical skills and more about providing a new approach to deliver traditional youth work. Participants highlighted the versatility of social and digital media, and the synergy with the curricular themes and principles. Examples were given of how ICT had been used to support group work and team building, how it was used to involve young people in planning and decision making, in offering experiential learning, as a focus for issue based work, and a means to harness young people's interests.

Reservations about ICT in youth work

Although the vast majority of comments were positive, a small number of participants in the focus groups (and online surveys) suggested ICT could be intrusive or a '*distraction*' in a youth work context and/or that young people had sufficient access to technology in their school and home lives. Further, the provision of ICT hardware to youth groups, without the necessary support and training, was felt to be unhelpful. The message was that ICT offers a powerful tool for youth workers, but it is the <u>way</u> in which this tool is used which will determine its effectiveness in supporting youth work.

Challenges and solutions

When asked about blockages and enablers to ICT in youth work, there was a high level of consistency across the four focus groups. The main enablers which were identified were: resources, commitment, workforce development and practice support. Conversely, the list of blockages included restricted access, lack of guidance, low level skills, and risk-averse mind-sets (see table below).

ENABLERS	BLOCKAGES
Commitment and positive attitudes about the use of social and digital media, including having a 'champion' to promote its value as a youth work tool	The concerns with safeguarding, child protection and minimising organisational risk are too rigid, eg blocked access to wifi, blocks on social media and filtered websites create a huge barrier to the potential use of ICT as a youth work too
Sustained and strategic investment : a capital budget for ICT which includes staff training in digital media: ring-fenced funds for ICT to encourage organisations to embrace the potential of this approach to youth work	No consistency in policies, or an absence of policies – no guidelines, lack of direction or development at sectoral level
Opportunities for skills development, knowledge transfer : access to ongoing training	Lack of knowledge and expertise, reluctance to embrace ICT, fear factor
ICT infrastructure – physical resources and well maintained, fit for purpose equipment (although not necessarily ICT suites – huge potential in use of portable devices)	Use of different systems across the sector means software may not transfer to other organisations
Willingness of staff, including volunteers	Risk-averse mind-sets, which can be at senior level, among some practitioners, and/or parental fears about social media
Having access to experts who are 'ICT savvy' both within organisations and across the sector	Over-reliance on experts or key people within organisations – lack of skills transfer
Freedom to take measured risks	A culture of mistrust – suspicion about social media and an expectation that it will be misused by either practitioners or young people. A potential demonising of young people in terms of their social media usage
Opportunities for collaboration to make best use of existing skills and resources across sectors and organisations : potential for joint projects, sharing of skills, signposting among organisations, learning from each other	A 'head in the sand' attitude which fails to recognise young people's realities and avoids the need to support young people in e-safety
Guidelines in the use of social media (although a single policy may not suit such a diverse sector). Guidance which give staff clear boundaries – need to have a safe environment to ensure workers and young people are protected from potential harm	Lack of proactivity in the formal education sector to address and educate young people about online behaviour
Access to free software	Expensive equipment

Recommendations

Organisational level Survey respondents were asked what actions would be useful to support ICT within their organisations. The majority indicated that a specific funding stream to support digital initiatives, improved ICT infrastructure, guidance on professional ethics in the use of social media, professional development opportunities, sharing of good practice, access to taster sessions and a directory of training providers would be useful.

Strategic level Participants in the focus groups were asked what strategic actions they felt would be needed at a service-wide level to support the development of digital and social media in youth work. They identified the following key strategic actions:

1. A policy directive to support this approach to youth work, with high level commitment to an ICT strategy involving the Department of Education, the Education Authority NI, and the voluntary sector
2. A youth service strategy for ICT, supported by sustained investment and based on need
3. Relaxation of the restrictions on social media within the statutory sector, and a proactive approach by the youth service to address e-safety (in line with the Marshall report, 2014)
4. Access to a resource hub, leading to a fuller demonstration of the value of ICT as a tool for creativity and participation within youth work pedagogy
5. Development of partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, at both organisational and sector-wide levels, academia and private sector, and also at North/South and EU levels
6. Organisational policy and/or sectoral guidance on the use of social media in particular
7. Opportunities for continuous professional development

7

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

7. Republic of Ireland

The following chapter draws on extracts from the Irish national report, including a brief overview of the youth service and ICT context, some of the key findings from survey and focus groups, and recommendations. The full report is available to download on the Screenagers webpage.

Background to the organisation

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland, and supports the interests of 47 organisations. The work of NYCI includes policy, advocacy and research, promoting the international dimension to youth work, youth health and arts programmes, inter-culturalism, inclusion and child protection. NYCI has been proactive in exploring the issue of ICT in youth work, for example hosting a national conference as well as a 3 day seminar which attracted participants from across Europe.

An overview of youth work and youth services in Ireland

'Youth work' in the Republic of Ireland is defined by the Youth Work Act 2001 as "a *planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations*".

The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 is entitled *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* (BOBF). BOBF identifies young person specific commitments and outlines five national outcomes for children and young people which strive to ensure they are:

- active and healthy,
- achieving in all areas of learning and development,
- safe and protected from harm,
- have economic security,
- are connected, respected and contributing (BOBF, 2014: 7).

Underpinning this national policy framework is the *National Youth Strategy 2015 – 2020* which addresses the needs of the total youth population.

It is estimated that 382,615 young people participate in and benefit from the various activities and programmes provided by youth organisations throughout Ireland. This figure of 382, 615 represents 43.3% of the total youth population aged between 10 and 24 (Indecon, 2012). Indecon's independent analysis indicates that 53.3% of young people participating in youth work organisations in Ireland are believed to be economically or socially disadvantaged. The Indecon Report found that there were 40,145 volunteers and an estimated 1397 paid staff working in the youth sector.

The vast majority of youth work organisations provide recreational, arts and sports-related activities, while over half are engaged in activities which are focused on welfare and wellbeing. Issue-based activities also form an important focus for youth work organisations.

The current expenditure for youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs has fallen by almost 31.7% since 2008 from €73.1m to €49.9m in 2015. This has placed enormous strain on youth services at a time when the numbers and needs of young people are growing.

ICT Context

The current Government national policy framework makes a commitment to strengthen media literacy, including social media literacy. It also states that Government recognises that parents need advice and information on how best to protect their children from harm online, and children and young people need guidance from teachers and parents to learn how to manage and cope with this added dimension of modern life.

Section 3.19 of the policy framework acknowledges the importance of continuing to '*promote best practice by social media providers with respect to privacy controls and reporting mechanisms for abuse/bullying so as to better protect children online'* (2014:82). The framework also recognises that the *'development of new technologies, in particular social media, has created new modes of engagement and activism, and has helped connect the local and the global'* (2014: 102).

There is very little recognition in BOBF of the role of the youth work sector in realising the potential of children and young people's use of social and digital media. The focus appears to be on the formal education setting, teachers and parents to drive, deliver and support young people to realise their potential in the use of social and digital media.

When digital media is referred to in the national policy framework for children and young people it is in the context of promoting positive influences for childhood. It acknowledges that rapidly evolving forms of digital media are pervasive in all aspects of children and young people's lives.

In order to respond appropriately to the increasing influences on childhood of new technologies, digital media, sexualisation and commercialisation, the policy framework states that it needs to develop a better understanding of the different forms of social and digital media. Such information and learning is essential to equip children, young people, parents and society to respond to the inherent challenges that come with social and digital media.

To achieve these aims, the Government commits to increasing the digital literacy of young people, to build their skills and understanding about being safe online and to protect them from commercialisation and sexualisation. How it intends to achieve these ambitious objectives, however, is not explicitly stated within the national policy framework for children and young people. The focus would appear to be through investment and implementation of the new National Digital Strategy for Schools.

The first ever National Youth Strategy was published in October 2015. This strategy builds on the national policy framework for children and young people published in 2014. Under outcome 2 – 'achieving full potential in all areas of learning and education,' point 2.7 identifies the promotion of "*the use of technologies and support acquisition of digital skills of young people"* as an outcome (2015: 27).

Although the inclusion of this outcome in the National Youth Strategy is commendable, unfortunately the youth work sector is not specifically named as a key player in achieving this outcome. It is also worth noting that point 2.7 is the only reference made to digital media in the entire National Youth Strategy and 'social media' is not referred to at all.

There is scope for the youth work sector to play a key role in achieving these objectives but greater financial support is required to support and enable youth workers to incorporate new and emerging forms of social and digital media into youth work practice.

Methodology

The Screenagers research undertaken in the Republic of Ireland employed a mixed methods approach (combining documentary, quantitative and qualitative), however the study relied mainly on qualitative research methods to explore and answer the key research questions.

<u>Research Methods</u>

<u>Survey:</u> The study included a questionnaire containing 13 closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was disseminated via NYCI databases by email and NYCI twitter in April 2015 and 283 youth workers responded. Surveys not completed in full were eliminated from the total number of responses.

<u>Focus groups:</u> Two focus groups were conducted with youth workers and two focus groups were conducted with young people. The focus groups were undertaken in Dublin (urban area) and in Tipperary (rural area), and participants were from the Leinster and Munster provinces. The participants in the focus groups with youth workers were of mixed ages and had a broad range of experience as youth workers, ranging from working in 'mainstream' youth work or working in specific youth projects.

<u>Case Studies:</u> Three case studies have been presented from the Ireland experience.   Haunted Asylum, Clubhouse and Global Voice for Change are all projects represented in the case studies highlighting the use of ICT in youth work settings.

Key Survey and focus group findings

Extent, purpose and value of the use of social and digital media in youth work

The survey results indicate that **77%** of respondents use social and digital media in their work with young people and **23%** of respondents do not use it.

Purposes for using social and digital media in youth work	%
To provide information/advice to young people	68
As part of youth work	60
To arrange meetings/activities	60
To recruit young people to youth work activities	59
Other reasons	10
To provide counselling	4

Nb. Table is based on the 77% of respondents who use ICT in their youth work

10% of respondents stated that they used social and digital media for a variety of different reasons. One respondent stated it was used to provide young people with new skillsets. It was also used to highlight the work being done by young people and allow parents, guardians and other family members to stay up to date on their children's activities through youth organisations private Facebook pages. It is also used by youth workers to communicate with co-workers about planning, and used for capacity development and for workshops. 'Sharing photos of activities and events', 'marketing' and 'research,' 'using messenger to communication with some people instead of using emails' and 'using it as a mechanism to recruit volunteers,' were also identified by respondents as reasons for using social media in youth work practice. One respondent

said it was used to give "recognition of young people's achievements." Another said it was used to give advice to young people on how to stay safe online.

The survey of youth workers suggested that Facebook continues to be the most commonly used social media channel for communicating with young people and to promote events or disseminate information to young people with 92% of the respondents who use ICT stating they used this medium.

53% of the survey respondents who use ICT stated they used 'YouTube' in their youth work practice. 52% used 'digital photography' and 49% of youth workers used 'video/filming making' in their youth work practice. 30% used 'twitter' in their youth work practice while 10% used 'Instagram.' 5% of youth workers used 'Tumblr' and 5% used 'Snapchat' in their youth work practice. 13% of youth workers stated that they used 'E-learning,' 8% used 'coding' and 2% used 'App Development.' 11% of youth workers surveyed stated that they used 'Gaming' and 13% used 'Blogs' in their youth work practice. 5% of survey respondents stated that they used 'other' forms of social and digital media in their youth work practice such as 'Pinterest,' email, 'Online Guide Manager,' Viber Groups, WhatsApp Groups, for google/web searches, photo editing, texting and website updating, and for research and evaluation. It was also used for teaching children through videos and slideshows.

The survey found that 23% of respondents did not use any form of social or digital media in their youth work, for the following reasons:

Reasons for not using social and digital media in youth work	%
Prefer to use face to face youth work	49
Other	28
Don't have relevant knowledge or skills	21
Lack of resources	20
Poor connectivity, eg. lack of broadband	10
Lack capacity	8

Nb Table is based on the 23% of respondents who do not use ICT in youth work

'Other' reasons identified by survey respondents for not using social or digital media ranged from concerns about confidentiality, to restrictive organisational social media policy guidelines which prohibited use.Respondents also stated that they did not use social or digital media because it was neither relevant nor appropriate to the age group of the young people they worked with.

Training

In exploring the issue of barriers to the use of social and digital media in youth work, lack of specialised training was cited as a major barrier by youth workers. Less than a quarter of youth workers (24%) had received training on use of social and digital media in youth work. A significant 76% of youth workers stated that they had never received training on use of social or digital media in youth work.

Some youth workers identified themselves as 'very knowledgeable' others as 'less knowledgeable.' The former tended to have ICT backgrounds or ICT experience prior to working as a youth worker. Many youth workers, when asked how they acquired their knowledge and skills in the use of ICT, social and digital media described themselves as 'self-taught.' Most of the youth workers, unless they had previously studied or worked in ICT before becoming a youth worker, had never received any sort of formal training in use of ICT, social or digital media in youth work practice.

In relation to formal training on the use of social and digital media for youth workers, there appears to be a gap in training specifically focusing on social media. Some youth workers had received training prior to working in youth work but youth workers without a background in the use of social media admitted that often they learned about using social media through YouTube or from the internet.

Training Received

Of the 24% of respondents who had received training on the use of social and digital media, the type of training received varied. Survey respondents were asked to provide details of the training they had received. The following are examples of the types of training supports identified by respondents and give an indication of the nature and extent of sector specific training available to support youth workers:

- Internet Safety organised by Youth Work Ireland in Galway.
- Degree Multimedia Applications Development. Honours Degree Project management & Software Development.
- TechSpace Network.
- International web seminars on health, education, sexual health training, human rights framework development, media training and social media training.
- McAfee Online Safety for young people and Foroige's Policy.
- ECDL, Word, Powerpoint, photography.
- Intel Computer Clubhouse Network Training (Induction training plus yearly conferences in the USA (linked to MICT in Boston, Adobe Youth Voices Training, Camera TechSpace training.
- Online course marketing and reputation management.
- NYCI Internet safety for youth workers 1 day course.
- Policy training re social media, digital photography.
- NYCI one day workshop on film. Leargas Prezi workshop.
- Adobe Youth Voices training.
- Spunout training.
- Child Protection training.
- Foroige.
- Local training on Facebook and twitter.
- Intermediate social media skills course in UCC.
- Xhale workshops.

Most of the youth workers said that they didn't let their lack of training and knowledge or competency inhibit them from *trying* to incorporate new forms of social and digital media into their work. Many felt, however, that specialised training for youth workers and a forum for them to meet annually to share and exchange ideas and practice on the use of social and digital media in youth work would be of great value. It would also help to enhance the use of social and digital media in youth work practice in Ireland.

Challenges

The youth workers identified a myriad of challenges that they had encountered or continue to face in using social and digital media in their work. Barriers relate to issues around lack of training, lack of knowledge, skills, competency and confidence to use social and digital media. They also identified concerns about managing time, managing the 'boundaries of technology' and dealing with young people's expectations that they will be responsive via social media outside working hours.

They cited concerns about their vulnerability working in the social and digital space in relation to the appropriateness of the communication with the young person or young people they are communicating with.

Budgetary constraints were highlighted as a structural barrier in terms of access to equipment, and availing of relevant ICT training (as part of their continuous professional development) to support and enhance the use of

social and digital media in their work. The issue of poor broadband and connectivity was also highlighted as a significant structural barrier, particularly in rural parts of Ireland.

Some youth workers felt the use of social and digital media was in many ways "a double-edged sword." While it had many benefits, it also had inherent risks in terms of the potential to impinge on one's privacy and to be open to abuse. Concerns were expressed about young people contacting them after hours or in an inappropriate manner. Other concerns related to privacy settings being too rigid or to loose and the problems which could arise from both scenarios. The youth workers stated that there is a desire to create an open and inviting social media presence to ensure that young people come to youth work, but at the same time ensuring that it isn't too open to be subject to abuse. Managing the openness versus the privacy restrictions on social media was described as 'challenging' by youth workers.

The other concerns related to the fact that the types of social and digital media that young people are using changes so quickly and this presents difficulties in keeping informed. It also means that it is harder to monitor what the young people are posting.

Additional points from focus groups

Nature, extent and purpose: Youth workers spoke at length about some of the ways in which they used social and digital media 'to engage and connect' with the young people they work with. Some participants in the focus groups said their ignorance of some of the newer forms of social media served as a talking point between them and the young people. The youth workers said that they felt the young people liked to feel they knew more than the adults (a point reinforced by the young people during the focus groups with young people). They also said that learning about social and digital media from the young people served as a useful way of forging a relationship between the youth worker and the young person.

In incidences where high end use of social and digital media was used in youth work, the youth project or programme tended to be designed specifically for that purpose and the youth workers were trained in the use of social and digital media.

The primary purpose for using social media cited by many youth workers in the focus groups was as a means of communications. Sometimes a young person in a vulnerable position uses social media to contact a youth worker, to broach a difficult subject or to seek help.

One youth worker stated that often she found that some young people find it easier to speak to an adult via social media initially. Some youth workers felt that using social media particularly for communication purposes had actually increased face to face time with young people by enhancing attendance. Other youth workers said they had to actively manage and maintain a balance between online time and offline time in youth work, otherwise it would impact on 'face to face' time with the young people.

The added value of using Facebook and other forms of social media to engage with young people, however, was deemed by youth workers to far outweigh the negative aspects of its use.

Use of social and digital media: In instances where social media was used in youth work, youth workers used it in many different ways. One youth worker described how it was used in the youth café where she worked. The focus of the work she does with young people aged between 12 and 18 centres around the teenage health programmes delivered. She stated that the youth setting had a lot of computers and that while internet use was one of the most popular activities, young people also used digital media and music as well.

Participants in one of the focus groups talked about the inherent risks associated with using Facebook in their work. Many youth workers did not have a personal Facebook account and if they have a personal social media presence, spoke of the importance of keeping a clear distinction between their personal and professional life, to ensure there is 'no blurring of boundaries.'

Some youth workers said they focused a lot on staying safe online when talking to young people about using social media. Some of the youth workers had received McAfee training and said that they used the presentation they had received during this training, in their work with young people on 'staying safe online.'

Using social media in the youth work setting ensures that young people are surfing the net or using social media under supervision. The point was made that many young people use social media at home in an unsupervised setting. When they are using social media in computers in the youth centre, they are being supervised.

One youth worker stated that they use digital media to show good examples of good quality media and to address interesting topics related to young people's community. It is used to challenge the young people to think about what is important to them. In terms of teenage health, a youth worker stated that they use a manual programme for teenage health and young people use websites to research about contraception. She said the use of social media and the internet was positive in this regard as long as young people are accessing the correct information.

Organisational Policies on the Use of Social and Digital Media: All of the youth workers who participated in focus groups stated that the organisations they worked for had a social media policy in place. When asked about the nature of the policy, some policies were much more rigid than others in how social media could be used to communicate with young people. The issue of child protection was a fundamental principle overriding the organisations policies on the use of social and digital media. Most the social media policies described by participants referred to stipulations in policies that youth workers did not use their personal profiles for work and only use their youth work accounts. Policies also placed the onus on the youth worker to ensure that there was no cross over or link between the personal online presence and the professional on-line presence. Sanctions were in place, if employees breached the organisation's policy.

In terms of the use of Facebook in youth work, some youth workers stated that if they receive friend requests to join the youth work Facebook account, the decision to accept the invitation is at the discretion of the youth worker.

Recommendations

Arising from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, NYCI recommends the following 4 recommendations. These recommendations, if implemented, would help to support, enhance and embed the use of social and digital media in youth work practice in the Republic of Ireland.

Recommendation 1: Develop a National Digital Plan for the Youth sector.

In the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (BOBF), outcome 2.7 identifies the promotion of "*the use of technologies and support acquisition of digital skills of young people*" as an outcome. To achieve this outcome, a National Digital Plan for the youth work sector should be developed and resourced to support the sector (in collaboration with the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and other stakeholders) to embed social and digital media in youth work practice. It should incorporate supports to promote continuous training and professional development for all youth workers. It should also include measurable actions to:

- encourage and support youth workers to embed social and digital media in their youth work practice,
- enhance ICT capacity and awareness in youth work in partnership with relevant Government Departments and stakeholders,
- encourage a culture of innovation and creativity,
- increase investment in the ICT infrastructure to support and enhance the use of social and digital media in youth work and improve broadband infrastructure throughout the country particularly in rural regions and
- provide information, advice and tools to promote safer, more responsible and more effective use of the social and digital media.

Recommendation 2: Design and delivery of bespoke or specialist training on the use of ICT, social and digital media for youth workers.

There is a general deficit across the board in the youth work sector in relation to knowledge, skills and competency of youth workers on the use of social and digital media and its application in youth work practice.

The only training currently available to youth workers in the Republic of Ireland focuses on the use of digital media. Youth workers felt bespoke training on use of social and digital media needs to be developed to support youth workers to incorporate new forms of social media into their youth work practice. Training on the use of social and digital media for youth workers should include 'mindful' use of technology in the youth work sector. It should also encourage a critical analysis of the use of ICT. Such training should form part of the third level curriculum for youth work students and should also be available to youth workers as part of their continuous professional development.

Recommendation 3: Create networking and information opportunities for youth workers to include annual and regional events

The investment in the establishment of networking and information opportunities for youth workers where they can meet periodically to share and exchange best practice on ICT use in youth work, is extremely important. Such opportunities could be organised on a regional, sectoral and thematic basis. Youth workers in the focus groups said it was hard to *'keep on top of the new and rapidly changing forms of social and digital media'* that young people were using. Creating a space where they can network and have the opportunity to both contribute to active learning and professional skills development, receive advice on how to overcome challenges in using ICT in their youth work and share examples of quality media youth work practice, is essential. This must be adequately resourced and will require sustained and appropriate investment.

Recommendation 4: Establish an ICT Support Unit for the Youth Work sector.

The Support Unit would function to provide support for youth workers in all aspects of ICT use in their youth work practice. The Unit would have responsibility for implementing the National Digital Development Plan for the Youth Work sector. The Unit personnel would be responsible for the design and co-ordination of bespoke training to youth workers at all aspects of their professional career (as outlined in Recommendation 1) and the creation of networking and information opportunities for youth workers (as outlined in Recommendation 3). The unit would also respond to information enquiries, provide specialised training to address skills and competency deficits (as outlined in Recommendation 2), offer on-line safety guidance and assist youth organisations to develop organisational policy on use of ICT. This must be adequately resourced and will require sustained and appropriate investment.

8

STUDIES OF PRACTICE

8. Studies of Practice

The research fieldwork included compilation of 3-4 case studies of practice in each country, aiming to reflect the versatility and practical applications of ICT in a youth work context. All case studies can be accessed in full from the individual country reports on the Screenagers website. www.youth.ie/screenagers

The following pages present abridged versions of 15 of the case studies, and include:

Northern Ireland

ICT's Politics Project : Mencap
Step out App : Youthlink
Code Academy : Boys Brigade

Finland

Hypecon: City of Hyvinkää Youth Services
Gaming group : Merirasti youth centre
Multi-professional chat service : Bystrom youth services

Denmark

Coding Pirates
ICT and digital media among 0-6 year olds
Cyberhus.dk online counselling

Austria

Let's play workshops: wienXtra
'The witches of Simmering' : Youth club Eleven
Serhaus : Youth and district centre Margareten

Republic of Ireland

Haunted Asylum : Ballymun Regional Youth Resource
Computer Clubhouse : Foroige
Global Voice for Change : Plan International

IT's Politics Project : Mencap, Northern Ireland

Aim and activities This project engaged with 24 young people (aged 16-25) with a learning disability living in Northern Ireland. The aim of the project was to use ICT, social media and peer led workshops to encourage young people with a learning disability to become actively involved in their community by helping them understand their opportunities, rights and responsibilities as citizens and to become actively engaged in political life. The project also supported young people with a learning disability to understand their right to vote, engage in politics and talk about the issues that are important to them. The project was delivered primarily through a combination of:

- Workshops on topics such as e-safety, social media, rights and responsibilities, voting, the role of politicians and having your voice heard.
- Online information and guidance to provide young people with a learning disability with the skills, information and confidence to become actively and safely engaged in the political process.
- Completion of an OCNNI level 3 module on E-Safety delivered by the LiveNet project.
- Setting-up of a twitter account @ICTspoliticsproj for the participants to use and interact with each other and politicians.
- Celebration and husting event in the run up to the 2015 general election with 4 candidates. The Belfast group created a video invite encouraging other young people with a learning disability to come along to the event.

Outcomes for young people In addition to enabling participants to enjoy the opportunity to meet new people and develop/widen positive peer relationships the project resulted in a number of positive outcomes for young people. Young people developed their thinking, life and work skills, e.g. communication, planning and creativity and gained confidence and skills in using digital and social media http://youtu.be/j2zqcebhOoo

Young people increased their participation by taking on a representative role through communication with politicians and other adults and, in doing so, increased their understanding of the importance of having their voice heard in politics. Specific outputs from the project included

- 24 young people successful completed a series of workshops

- 17 Young people received an OCN Level 3 module in E-Safety

- Over 70 people attended the two celebration events

- 100% said they know more about being safe online

- 100% said they think ICT is important and useful

- 100% have more confidence about using social media to have their voice heard

- 90% said they know more about their rights, after completing the project.

- 86% know who makes important decisions for Northern Ireland, after completing the project

- 75% indicated they would vote in an election, after completing the project.

The project also provided positive outcomes for staff and volunteers involved who used a range of new ICT equipment throughout the project. There was a growth in confidence in using ICT and social media by staff within the project, There was also a greater awareness of the benefits and challenges of using ICT in Mencap's youth work with learning disabled young people in Northern Ireland.

One of the key factors in the success of the project was ensuring that young people have as much ownership of the project and can feed into the structure of the project as much as possible. The more input they have, the more they re-invested in the project. Making the activities were as fun and interactive as possible,

introducing them to new technology, and effective support and assistance for all of the young people were also important enablers within the project.

Step out App : Youthlink, Northern Ireland

Aim and activities The project was aimed at young people aged 16-24, and aimed to produce a Community Relations mobile app to inform young people of the variety of activities available to them and to encourage them to attend events and experiences outside of their normal cultural tradition. The activities included :

- Engage young people in the design of the app
- Young people involved in the content creation for the app
- Engaging a suitable mobile app creation service
- Young people from the initial group to pilot the use of the app
- Project launch of the app and encourage wider use

The outputs of the project included

- An app which is integrated with Youth Link NI's website, which supports groups and individuals to engage in community relations activities.
- The outputs are ongoing, as the app has been piloted with a group of young people who are developing and evolving it for the best possible use.
- The app is available free for download from ICTunes and Google App Store - just search Youth Link.

Outcomes for young people Through the development of the app, for example, deciding on its key features and prioritising its content, young people developed a range of thinking, life and works skills including communication, planning, decision-making, problem solving and creativity.

Through participation in the project participants were able to build on the positive peer relationships initiated in the Apprentices for Peace programme. For example, deciding on the app content provided the opportunity to talk more openly about and explore their own experience and perception of others from a different faith and/or community background. Through this process they identified the need to ensure the app was balanced across both of the main Northern Ireland traditions. Building on the learning gained in the Apprentices for Peace programme the young people in the Step out App project demonstrated their respect for difference by recognising the need to ensure the app was inclusive of other faith and cultural communities in Northern Ireland society.

By demonstrating their respect for difference the young people also illustrated their enhanced empathy with, and ability to advocate on behalf of, others that were not represented in their project group.

Staff also benefited from the project. They now feel more confident in the use of ICT and app technology and will be able to update the app on an ongoing basis. Working with the app production company they have developed a straightforward website to make it easy for staff to update the app. Using this website they can add new challenges, new users, and remove any inappropriate content that users may have uploaded.

Among the key factors which contributed to the success of the project were willingness of staff to participate and innovate, willingness of young people to get behind the idea, and engaging with the right creative team and sharing the vision effectively.

Code Academy : Boys Brigade, Northern Ireland

Aim and activities The was a coding course which involved 70 participants between the ages of 14 and 18 from Boys Brigade Companies situated in particular areas that were identified as economically deprived. The specific course aims were:

- To introduce young people to basic web design and development

- To introduce participants to the architecture and dependencies involved with web development

- To introduce good coding practices

- To introduce web development principles.

The activities included:

- Development of a bespoke training course with the School of Computing and Mathematics and the Computer Science Research Institute at Ulster University (UU)
- 'Hands-on' training delivered over 4-8 sessions (either weekly or over a residential weekend)
- Courses focussed on "hands-on" learning as facilitated by equipment supplied by UU
- Practical sessions to introduce and develop ideas and techniques
- Access to extra online materials provided to further develop ideas and techniques shared during the practical and onsite sessions

Each participant received a certificate of participation with those successful receiving a Level 3, 5-credit CPPD computing module through the submission of an assignment completed during the course and validated by Ulster University (UU). A celebration event hosted by Ulster University took place for participants to be presented with their certificates.

Outcomes for young people The project has resulted in positive outcomes for the young men who increased thinking, life and work skills, including their communication and problem solving skills. Many benefited from the informal learning environment and the opportunity for peer learning resulted in more positive peer relationships and enhanced relationships with the Training Officers and Company Leaders. The project has created pathways for young people into employment, education and training with participants learning new skills in web design, web communication and in online research.

The young people understand that the skills they are learning through these courses in The Boys' Brigade are transferable, and in addition they recognise the value of these skills in helping them both within their organisation, but also in their education or chosen career paths.

There have been significant benefits for capacity within the organisation. Eighteen Boys' Brigade Training Officers completed training provided by UU academics and then rolled out a website design and development course to Boys' Brigade Companies. Having 'trained trainers' to deliver this course, it provided a new confidence regarding the use of ICT within the organisation and provided a new youth work programme not previously offered by The Boys' Brigade.

Key factors contributing to the success of the project included the value of having volunteers trained as tutors, by professionals from UU, who were then able to deliver the course in their local BB Company, and the ability to deliver the course (including equipment) in each Company's location. The only blockage or hindrance

encountered was the limited finance for hardware that would have allowed more training courses to take place and subsequently more participants to have benefitted.

HypeCon : City of Hyvinkää Youth Services, Finland

Aim and activities

HypeCon is an event which aims to offer young people an opportunity to participate in all stages of the planning, realisation and organisation of an event built around their personal interests, with the help of social media tools in particular. Young people with varying interests, skills and ability work to achieve a common goal. Digital media makes it possible to connect young people throughout the year-long planning process as well as during the one-day event itself. Young people are offered opportunities to develop their digital skills at the event itself, where they independently produce an online broadcast of the event.

The first HypeCon was held in 2012. Until now, the event has focused on the non-mainstream hobbies of young people. In the early years, the content was strongly centred around anime, manga and various types of gaming. Since then, the event has brought together enthusiasts from all over Finland. The event was originally conceived of as a small, end-of-season event for youth clubs, but thanks to the use of social media in event production, it expanded in its first year into one of the key youth events in the area. In 2015, the event was attended by around 1,500 young people, and hundreds of people watched the direct broadcast through the Twitch service.

The HypeCon events have been based on a very small budget. Actual costs have only been accrued in relation to poster and shirt printing and the acquisition of prizes for various tournaments and competitions. The event has been held on the city's premises, whose use and prices have been separately negotiated within the city organisation. Youth workers do not need to be highly familiar with technology or content, since the key issue is to involve young people according to their personal strengths. They can act as experts in website administration or video recording, for example.

Outcomes for young people

The number of participants has grown year by year, which is something that the young people like. They enjoy participating in the creation of an event that competes in the same category as other major Finnish conventions.

Facebook is used a great deal in the process and the young people find it a good tool for event planning. Everyone can share their ideas on Facebook and it is also used to ensure that all of the young participants perform their tasks as agreed. Although everyone involved in organising the event has their own area of responsibility, in practice everyone does a bit of everything due to the small number of actual organisers.

The young people regard the youth worker's role as a coordinator to be highly important. The youth worker is the head organiser and organises the planning meetings, keeps track of young people's responsibilities and guides them through the practical arrangements.

The young people value being part of such a major phenomenon, *"The feeling you get when you see 1,500 people rushing through the doors to your event."* The abundance of positive feedback has also pleased them. They continue their involvement with a willingness to do something useful but fun, and have a desire to see the event evolve year after year. They do not need other activities to complement the core activity. As a result of organising and hosting the event the young people have experienced new, insightful experiences and the feeling of success. They have overcome challenges of finding time for meetings and disappointment when someone has not taken care of their mutually agreed responsibilities. The young people hope that in the future they can attract more young people to organise the event.

Gaming Group : Merirasti, Finland

Aim and activities

In 2013 the Merirasti youth centre established a digital gaming group for boys aged 13 – 19. The group meets on a weekly basis and currently has seven members. Its activities have been focused on the League of Legends game. The purpose of the activity is to create new friendships, immerse the participants in their hobby at a deeper level, and to help them to learn new things about the League of Legends and organise gaming events. The activities are supervised and a programme is planned for each meeting. In addition to weekly meetings, group members chat on Facebook. They also organise and participate in various gaming events and LAN parties. The group has organised three LAN parties at the youth centre. LANs are gaming events where gamers gather on the same premises to play and engage in digital culture using their own computers. The computers are connected to each other via a local area network (LAN). A LAN party can last from one to several days. The group has also collected money through voluntary work and participated twice in the Assembly gaming event, Finland's largest LAN event.

One participant has become a member of the eSport organisation Good Game Squad, after being inspired to play League of Legends in the youth group. The Good Game Squad is a youth work-oriented electronic sports organisation that offers young competitive gaming enthusiasts an opportunity to take their first steps into electronic sport, guided by professional coaches and a professional organisation.

A key factor behind the group's success lies in the fact that a youth worker was allowed to spend his working hours organising the activities. This has necessitated spending a great deal of time with the group and taking responsibility for its operations. Personal activity by the participants has been a key component in the success of the project. The group has proven that young people can actively organise gaming events if they are offered support, encouragement and the experience of success.

Outcomes for young people

Digital gaming has given young people a sense of community while introducing them to learning and organising events together, and has deepened their knowledge of competitive digital gaming. Through its activities, the group has become a solid circle of friends whose members play together outside meetings on an almost daily basis. Youth workers also participate in the gaming sessions. The group is made up of young people from multicultural backgrounds and therefore can mix with people they may not have the opportunity to otherwise.

The initiative gives young people the opportunity to make the leap from being visitors to working on *"the other side,"* they enjoy organising their own events. They particularly enjoy being able to make decisions by themselves. More experienced LAN party organisers shoulder a larger share of the responsibilities, while others handle smaller tasks. Everyone can have a say on what they do, although some tasks are raffled out among them. They have not found event organisation too difficult, and youth workers have helped them whenever necessary.

Many young people felt that they had learned social skills while gaming. One of them revealed that he used to become angry about other group members' mistakes and harangue them. However, he began to notice his own mistakes and that harping on individual errors did not feel good or help the game progress. He learned the hard way that *"we play better when there's a little less criticism."*

Multi-professional chat service : Byström youth services, Finland

Aim and activities

Young people can talk to a youth worker, a nurse, a school counsellor, a vocational psychologist and a sexual health counsellor in a one-to-one chat. The target audience of the Byström chat service are young people aged 12 to 29 who live in the Oulu region. The aim of the services is to provide regional-level personal support and advice, both online and offline. They also aim to lower the threshold for seeking help and advice from local professionals outside the Internet. The professionals are trained to work online, and their training has included matters such as online encounters, online slang and practical issues like the process involved in working a chat shift. Professionals whose chat shift occurs at the same time also communicate with each other using Google Hangouts, which provides them with a collective, multi-professional channel for sharing challenging situations**.**

Outcomes for young people

The service also benefits young people in sparsely populated areas, since services may not be available nearby. Combining physical and online services is advantageous, as it enables professionals to refer young people onwards and provide them with a low-threshold service. Young people gain real-time contact with a professional, both online and offline. For example, a young person can chat with a vocational psychologist and, if necessary, book a face-to-face appointment with her. Network encounters lower the threshold for young people wishing to visit the service in person. The goal is to be where young people are, and conduct multi-professional youth work online.

Anonymous one-to-one chats tend to be more problem-oriented by nature than group chats. Young people often have a specific matter or problem they wish to talk about. If necessary, the young person can visit the Byström youth services or contact other local professionals after the chat. The most popular topics include family problems, feeling low, sexuality, jobs and study places.

Young people benefit from having access to a highly professional service where staff continually engage in training. The Byström chat workers record each conversation on an electronic reporting form that prompts them to rate the success of the discussion and the young person's need for support and guidance. After the chat, the young person also receives a link to a questionnaire asking for his or her opinion of the discussion.

Every six months, the employees of the Youth Information and Counselling Centre Nappi use the assessments to organise a development day in order to plan operations and improvements for the coming season and to provide chat workers with training on the themes they have reported as necessary.

Coding Pirates : Denmark

Aim and activities

Coding Pirates is a Danish volunteer association founded in spring 2014. When children play and draw, they use their imagination, and Coding Pirates aims to enable them to do the same through the use of technology. With Coding Pirates, the children thus have the opportunity and free space to express their creativity in interaction with various technologies**.** Coding Pirates is a free time activity for 7 to 17 year-olds, in line with other youth services such as scouting and handball, for those who are interested in being creative with ICT**.**

Coding Pirates comprises one weekly activity which can run on a quarterly or half-yearly basis. The children are distributed in various workshops according to their interests, age or theme, and they work with different themes or technologies such as 3D printing and game programming. The structure of the workshops depends on the volunteers.

In just one year, the Coding Pirates project has experienced great development; it has gone from consisting of one department to having 20 departments across Denmark, with 450 enrolled children, and more are constantly joining.

Coding Pirates have also been introduced within academia. For example, they participate with workshops on various knowledge festivals and conferences, including FabLab@SCHOOL, CounterPlay and Internet Week Denmark.

Outcomes for young people

By giving children an insight into programming and technology, Coding Pirates wish to give children the opportunity to relate critically to our society. The focus is to spark a technological curiosity within the children so they learn to think with technology, and not just consume it. They are provided the opportunity to learn that technology is not something that just "is"; it is always possible to change it and do something with it. The children's digital horizon is extended and hopefully they can develop into becoming critical and reflective consumers of technology.

ICT and digital media among 0-6 year-olds : Denmark

Aim and activities

The following case study is conducted in a Danish nursery and a kindergarten. In the pre-school setting, the use of digital media is often limited to cameras and projectors, but there are ongoing changes to the situation within this area.

These developments include the use of smartphones, tablets and monitors. These tools serve to increase efficiency and meet cuts, without it being at the expense of the children. The fewer distractions allow for more presence, but they do recognise the "hidden time" required by the use of digital media, such as charge and installation time and updating programs.

Additionally, they have an interactive floor on which contents from a computer is projected, and there are apps attached which enable the children to create their own games, video, or the like.

It is also possible to deal with school-related topics, but educators emphasise that it is important for them that it remains fun. Tablets, ICT and digital media are often used in a context where the children need to sit still, but they can also be used in connection with movement.

Furthermore, the educators also use tablets with translation apps in communicating with parents who have difficulties in understanding Danish. The institution also uses a tablet to record a child they had concerns about, in order for them to observe the child at a later stage without being disturbed and thus determine how to proceed.

Outcomes for young people

Young children are provided the opportunity to create something themselves. By creating content, it is possible to actualise things they deal with while they develop ideas, collaborate and get their creative sense supported. For an adult, it is essential to let the children decide and have ownership, since there is a great development potential in the process as co-creator.

The use of tablets can produce homemade puzzles or books where the children helped to find pictures and songs as well as record sounds to games of memory. In this way, the medium became a tool for dialogue that could change content, and for instance, the children practiced recognising motives and pronouncing names of animals. Like other toys, the medium can support play relations and also has the advantage that the activity and content can vary, meaning that it is not fixed in terms of level of difficulty.

Cyberhus.dk : Denmark

Aim and activities

cyberhus.dk is an online counselling site for Danish children and young people aged 9 to 23. The website focuses on providing a service to vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and also to be a site for young people with more mainstream problems related to being young. Both boys and girls make use of the service, and are spread geographically throughout Denmark. It is particularly 15 to 18-year-olds who visit the site. Offering confidentiality with the child/young person is central to cyberhus.dk's approach.

Young people make use of the problem pages, blogs, life stories and debate on cyberhus.dk in order to talk with other young people, and to obtain advice from adults.

cyberhus.dk provides an alternative to parents, siblings, friends and teachers. cyberhus.dk is a place where children and young people can talk with people who hold no "stocks" in their life. This also means that young people can be completely anonymous at cyberhus and do not need to worry about the meaning of what they tell.

Outcome for young people

Young people can find help which they don't find anywhere else. They benefit from expressing their problems to others and gaining an understanding that they are not the only ones experiencing the problem. Young people use cyberhus.dk when looking for some good advice, a good talk or a new perspective on things. cyberhus.dk is seen by young people as a place to safely write, express themselves and receive the help and advice they need. Some young people appreciate the anonymity they have with cyberhus.

Children and young people not only use sites like cyberhus to receive advice and guidance from adult advisors but also to talk with other young people about a common theme that they might not feel able to talk with other children and young people about in "reality".

Let's play workshops : wienXtra, Austria

Aim and activities The project aimed to create a joint educational concept around the immensely popular video format 'Let's play' for kids, and to design workshops teaching kids how to produce their very own 'Let's play' videos. Let's Play refers to narrated live recordings of oneself playing a computer game or playing on a games console.   Children and teenagers gain a vast variety of knowledge in and around the topic of games as cultural asset.

The workshops were designed for girls and boys aged between 10 and 13 and took place as part of the concept of the *wienXtra-ferienspiel* (wienXtra-holiday games - free leisure programme for kids during summer holidays). A total of five daily workshops of 6 hours each were offered. There were 51 children altogether (9 girls, 42 boys) who took part in the programme. Three pedagogues conducted and supervised each of the

workshops to create a working atmosphere in small groups of 3 to 4 teens each, wherein each group was able to present their own Let's Play video at the end of the workshop.

The workshops consisted of introductory exercises, joint viewing of Let's Plays where the group gathered features that make for a great video production. Then mentors presented games suitable for every age group and the kids were given the chance to choose two favourites among them. After that, they were divided into small groups and were given enough time to play the selected game together and to sketch out the main features of their own Let's Play, for example, who will be behind the camera, when will players be visible via facecam, how should the video be introduced and closed etc. For each group there was one mentor to help with any arising questions, to remind the teens of their task over the next hour, to support them in drawing up a concept and to give advice on feasibility. In order to provide a clear framework, the exclusive time for recording per playing session was limited.

At the recording station, there was one mentor who would calmly reiterate the course of the respective Let's Play and show the girl or boy behind the camera how the facecam was operated. After recording, the group would cut and reorganise the recording material with cutting software into their finished Let's Play video**.**

Every small team then presented their Let's Play to the other participants. Spirits were high and excited and many times outcries of *'That's a wrap!'* could be heard. However, the videos were not uploaded onto YouTube, due to concerns about copyright of one's own picture, parental consent, possible copyright infringements through using a certain game etc.

Outcomes for young people   The feedback sessions showed that producing Let's Plays is fun indeed. The benefits to young people were to have a go in front of the camera, to imitate their favourite Let's Player for the camera or simply to play together. Soon it became clear to all participants that technically as well as creatively it's far from child's play to produce a Let's Play clip. Hence, the workshop also broadened the kids' range of possibilities and allowed them to gain insights into the growing field of Let's Plays by contributing to actual production.

The young people expanded their technical capabilities of how a Let's Play production involves games consoles and video equipment in a group setting that's as easy-going as possible. Through continuous repetition, the concept was thoroughly investigated and thus its value will be recycled in the further education and advanced training possibilities for youth workers.

Through this project, *spielebox* and *medienzentrum* established a direct link to the world of young adults, took up current media preferences and advanced and broadened possibilities for action of children and teenagers by providing valuable spaces so they can try out and experiment with their own ideas for creating media.

"The Witches of Simmering" : Youth club Eleven, Austria

Aim and activities This project was initiated at a girls club where the girls had a desire to explore the subject of gender equality and subsequently raised the topic during one of the girls' afternoons by discussing legendary women. The girls were flicking through a book about great female personalities in search of strong women and also continued their research online. First of all, the girls came across popular women in the music industry such as *Rihanna* and they found out that contrary to this, men were much more dominant and popular in fields such as science and politics. Thus, they embarked on a search for female role models and each of them picked a woman's biography that fascinated them. At the same time, the question of women's visibility in public places, in their immediate surroundings arose, especially in relation to street names in the Simmering district. How could they make women more visible? *"We could shoot a video about that!"*

During the next girls' club, the girls thought about the roles they wanted to play in the video; this gave birth to the idea of darting around Simmering as witches and to 'hex' women's names into given street names. Three girls were acting in front of the camera and were also directing their pedagogue (who was behind the camera) on how the shots should look. Their very own home district, Simmering, became a playful world. Not only did they put magic spells on street names so that they suddenly contained women's names ("Malala-Yousafzai-

Street", "Cleopatra-Street", "Marie-Curie-Alley", "Pippi-Longstocking-Street"), they also wanted to gender street names: they transformed the German masculine street name "Simmeringer Hauptstraße" into its female equivalent "Simmeringerinnen Hauptstraße". In enchanting street names, the girls also made visible how they themselves wanted to be perceived in the public eye. Thus, they conjured a female "Dancers' Park" ("Tänzerinnen-Park" in German) and the "Volleyball-Players' Street" ("Volleyballerinnen-Straße in German).

At the next girls' club meeting, they watched the video material and discussed appropriate music and the overall look of the video. The cutting was done by one of the pedagogues following the girls' instructions. It was most important to her that every creative element was determined in cooperation with the girls. After finishing the video, a film premiere was held at the girls' club and those involved discussed if they wanted to publish the video. "The Witches of Simmering" can now be viewed on the *Jugendtreff Eleven's* YouTube channel. The video was also highly popular with other youth centres and the concept was adapted and applied in various other districts as well. The girls were invited to other youth centres where they screened their video and advised other girls on how to realise their own videos.

Outcomes for young people For some, discussing the topic of strong women was their only interest, while others went even further and decided to take part in the video. The young women had fun in producing a video, showcasing themselves in public places and being able to induce changes and call for attention. The collective realisation of such a video project had many effects on different levels: Sensitisation to gender equality, increasing women's visibility in public, realising their own ideas in relation to media, self-empowerment through positive, funny actions in front of the camera, strengthening the girls' self-confidence, and supporting creative and active movements in favour of women's & human rights. *The Witches of Simmering* is a good example on how working with media within the context of youth work can be successful. Media are tools in teenagers' everyday life and are also accessible for many of them, therefore the girls and their pedagogues were able to approach this topic from a substantially content-specific point of view. Discussing how to intensify their approach came later on. Complying with a media project which was in line with the teenagers' needs also required the right attitude as well as the technological and media related self-confidence in their educators. They had to realise that media are part of the repertoire of possibilities which can be used to react to various subjects in youth work.

5erhaus : Youth and district centre Margareten, Austria

Aim and activities

At *5erhaus*, the use of media is an essential part and important field of action within the work in all target groups on several levels. The youth centre provides technological resources (Wifi, media devices such as cameras, video cameras, tablets, possibility for music production, free computer access), and staff members offer their expertise in many media-related fields to their target groups.

The main focus is placed on everyday, situation-based media work which is tailored to the needs of young adults during opening hours when youth workers are providing support for school tasks (including internet research and even preparing presentations) or helping young adults in finding a job (including online-job-hunt, preparing CVs and job applications). Creative media work such as picture editing or cutting videos are also part of their work, as is lending a helping hand in opening email and social media accounts or fixing little damages or malfunctions of the teens' own devices. Quick, creative experiments in the field of coding and within the Maker-scene are also provided, as are group gaming sessions on the computer or games consoles in the open area and moreover, there are also LAN-parties combined with sleepovers at *5erhaus*.

As an addition to the open area, there are also planned media projects (partly supported by external partners) through which adolescents can explore central life issues within expanded time resources and open themselves up to new creative possibilities.

The youth editorial team of CU television calls *5erhaus* their homebase, they produce television – made by young adults for young adults. CU television is a monthly youth television series by the *Verein Wiener Jugendzentren* (*Association of Youth Centres in Vienna*) broadcast on *OKTO*, a community TV-channel. Every

Saturday, the editorial team meet to work on their programme. Nevertheless, all the production facilities (camera, cutting workplace, studio, greenscreen) are always open for all teens.

Outcomes for young people

In 2014, the youth centre recorded almost 40,000 contacts that were made directly with their target groups and more than 2,000 contacts that happened online. Many adolescents are using *5erhaus'* Facebook page to get into contact with their youth workers, either via chats or the messaging function. This way, a great deal of individual counselling and communication occurs, supplementing the offline-contact at the youth centre. YouTube plays another important role in individual communications and relationship work, as adolescents send links to their own films to the team of *5erhaus* in order to receive online-feedback from them.

5erhaus constitutes a highly commendable example of youth work in Vienna because the needs and wishes of young adults in relation to media are being dealt with in the context of modern everyday life and in response to the young people's needs. Just as our life today is inseparably connected with media, *5erhaus* offers something for each target group; including encounters which are oriented towards the lives of young adults. Primarily, these encounters are only possible thanks to the *5erhaus*-staff who accompany their target groups on their way toward participation in our digital society and who look upon media-related skills as a process within lifelong learning – their own as well as that of their respective target groups.

Haunted Asylum : Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (BRYR), Republic of Ireland

Aims and activities

The project originated with a group of 10-12 year olds. It aims:

- To realise an ambitious large-scale environmental theatre piece in the Reco building.
- To repurpose the building for creative aims.
- To manage a large multi-discipline piece that will incorporate performance / art / technology.

Young people have the opportunity to engage in:

- brainstorming and liaising with duty staff and management
- storyboarding and mapping the project
- drafting to-do lists
- building costumes and props
- filming and editing video inserts for the project
- recording and editing audio effects for the piece.

Young people continuously brainstorm the project and youth workers make them aware of any inherent risks or disruptions to their plans. Youth workers facilitate the project development by illustrating the ideas that they come up with, and they also make sure that everyone feels comfortable and confident to contribute.

The youth workers are very proficient in events management, arts, performance-based work and the digital media technologies required to assist the learning and execution of the project. A key challenge identified by youth workers was to manage the enthusiasm and the growing number of excited young participants. An important aspect of the project was the ability to break the vision into structured tasks and 'to do' lists.

Outcomes for the young people

The intended outcomes of the programme are to:

- Enshrine strong communication between each other and the staff body in realising this large scale project.
- Encourage youth workers to participate and develop confidence with each suggestion that is being considered.
- Learn to work as part of a big team to realise a collective vision.
- Gain a greater understanding of the function of the building and the importance in being considerate to others in relation to issues of health & safety, appropriate content etc.
- Learn and share new skills.
- Challenge participants to become more ambitious in a healthy and fun way.

Computer Clubhouse : Foroige, Republic of Ireland

Aims and activities

The Computer Clubhouse works with 10 to 18 year olds and introduces them to high end technology in an out-of-school environment.

The Clubhouse is guided by four principles:

- The Clubhouse focuses on "constructionist" activities, encouraging young people to work as designers, inventors and creators.
- The Clubhouse encourages young people to work on projects related to their own interests.
- The Clubhouse aims to create a sense of community, where young people work together with one another with support and inspiration from adult mentors.
- The Clubhouse is dedicated to offering resources and opportunities to those who would not otherwise have access to them.

It gives participants the opportunity to become designers and creators, not just passive consumers of technology. They use the latest design, communications and information technology to create projects in video, music, design, robotics, animation and much more. Dedicated volunteer mentors and professional staff accompany the young people in their projects. The Computer Clubhouse is part of the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network, a worldwide community of over 100 Computer Clubhouses. The Clubhouse provides an opportunity for students to work alongside adult mentors on creative and exciting projects which involve Information Technology.

A Clubhouse mentor means being involved in an exciting, fun, engaging and personally (and professionally) rewarding programmes. Mentors help young people express themselves through technology. Successful mentors also become mutual learners. They empower young people by encouraging members to teach them about technology.

Outcomes for young people

Young people learn new skills in:

- Designing and making web pages. Students have the opportunity to learn about the language of HTML, how web pages are put together, what looks good and what doesn't work when designing web pages.
- Working with Lego robotics, learning how to programme the robot so that it moves, using touch sensors and working through issues of how to make the robots do what they are told.

- Working on creating their own movies using computer software to put together a sequence of photos, video clip and sound files to make a digital movie.
- Working on animations, students learn about creating the figures, moving them slightly each frame and then putting all of the frames together to create an animation.
- The Computer Clubhouse offers a range of exciting learning opportunities for students who are interested in learning skills and techniques which will serve them in the future.

Global Voice for Change (GVC) : Plan International, Republic of Ireland

Aim and activities

The goal of GVC is to *"create a structure that enables children and young people to engage with each other for peer to peer learning and for bringing together their voices from a local, to national, to regional, to international level, on issues that affect their lives, thus enabling them to be active global citizens."*

Outcomes for the young people

The Youth Steering Committee from GVC launched *10 Days to Act* campaign during a Youth Take-Over of the African Union on the Day of the African Child in June 2014. The young people involved in the project connected regularly using a mixture of Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, email, conference calls and physical meetings.

During the Ebola outbreak, the young people from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Norway connected and worked together to produce 9 blogs and 2 videos which were:

a) Picked up by the national, regional and international media and partners.
b) Used as part of Plan's G20 and Brussels donor conference advocacy material.
c) The most viewed blog on Plan's International website in 2014.
d) The process used to develop the blogs, vlogs and videos has been scaled up for the Millennium Children (MC) videos, blogs and supporting content.

The learning from involving young people in the Ebola response, including GVC, is being published in May's edition of the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Practice Network's magazine. A Global Voice for Change feature page on the multi-lingual Voices of Youth website (supported by UNICEF with over 300,000 followers online), has been created to publish GVC's videos and blogs and facilitate discussions between young people around the world.

A Youth Advocacy Toolkit training and GVC learning and evaluation workshop was held in Dakar in March. The training was funded by the UN's Global Education First Initiative and included partners from The Scouts, World Visions, Amnesty, CONAF and Youth in the Media in The Gambia. Additional partners engaged in GVC include Kids News Network, Children's Radio Foundation and West Africa Democracy Radio.

9

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE COLLABORATION

9. Joint recommendations and areas for future collaboration

Having appraised their research findings, each partner developed a set of recommendations to promote and develop ICT, digital and social media in the youth work sector within their country. These country-level recommendations are reproduced in chapter 2. Many of the country recommendations convey similar messages which reflect concerns about:

- strategic financial investment - in infrastructure, hardware, professional development, and practice development
- meeting the identified training needs of youth workers at all levels, from introductory basic skills training to professional development and bespoke courses, and with a focus on the practical application of skills
- the need to challenge resistant mind-sets, and to support a fuller and more creative use of ICT in youth work
- ensuring policy commitment within youth work sectors
- written guidance for youth workers, laying out principles of best practice and demonstrating impact, which could be supported through national Centres of Excellence and/or through national champions for ICT in youth work

Equipped with the evidence-base gained through the research, the national recommendations can now be promoted and disseminated by each partner to their policymakers, funders and youth service stakeholders, as appropriate.

At the final meeting in Finland in November 2015, partners began to develop a set of higher, EU-level recommendations, along with proposals for future projects which would sustain the momentum and build on the mutual value of international co-operation.

The joint recommendations and proposals are not definitive at this stage, and will require further development and feasibility-testing.

Partners recommend that future EU-wide actions and co-operation should be:

- ➢ Primarily aimed at youth workers;
- ➢ Practical in nature and approach;
- ➢ About connecting youth workers, networking and professional exchange; and
- ➢ Concerned with understanding the need for and building the capacity to develop organisational policy and practice guidelines around the development, use and content of digital and social media.

They recommend that two particular areas should be addressed in terms of EU-level strategic actions, these being practice development and training.

Practice development

Whilst partners advocate for greater practice-support mechanisms within their own country, they also proposed that a connected EU-wide resource would bring added value. The possibility of a **virtual EU information hub** was discussed. This could act as a repository of good practice across the EU, a place to compile case studies and to develop, test and share principles of good ICT use (eg Digital Dialogue from Denmark, Digitally Agile principles from Scotland etc).

A web page will be developed as part of the final pieces of work of Screenagers, and it was suggested that this could be the beginnings of the wider hub, as described above. In terms of the development of best practice guidelines, a future activity could involve convening a number of countries and organisations with an interest in the area, followed by a series of consultations to get as wide a range of opinion as possible. Guidelines could be developed through this partnership approach and could be tested in a range of countries, with the option of an international seminar to evaluate and make final recommendations.

Training

Whilst locally sourced training was found to be essential in developing the creative use of ICT in youth work, partners proposed that an EU-level approach of **training the trainers** would complement national training opportunities. Two possible approaches were devised by partners :

Option 1 for Training the trainers

Building on the experience of the current Screenagers project and the identification in the different research projects from the five countries, it is proposed that an international training course would be developed which will focus on key areas of need which have been identified by the participating countries in the current research. These areas might include:

- Technical skills
- How ICT helps to further the objectives of Youth Work – social education, empowerment, critical, social skills etc
- Critical media awareness and skills
- Social media platforms
- Developing best practice in this areas, eg. what are the indicators?

It was proposed that this training could take place across a number of countries, for example each of the partners could host one training module. The course would be aimed at trainers who could then develop a similar training programme at their national training level and pilot this in the year following this international training.

By the end of the course, there would be an accessible training course developed and delivered which would be available to youth organisations in the partner countries.

If this scale of a project was too ambitious, it was proposed that an exchange of skills could possibly be done through bi-lateral exchanges of trainers within the Screenagers project and under the banner of Screenagers.

Option 2 for Training the trainers

Nationally

- New, 'Low Threshold'[1] training structures and opportunities co-ordinated and provided nationally, involving small-scale pilots, operating simultaneously across the partner countries.
- The pilots would be responsive to urgent or priority local needs identified as relevant and appropriate in each country as well as proactive in addressing medium and longer terms needs identified in the recommendations of the Screenagers international research project.
- The pilots would be delivered in the form of (encouraging and motivating) cluster groups, with built-in opportunities for sharing learning from practice, knowledge exchange and collaborative practice – therefore acting as 'mini-hubs' and take place both offline and online.
- The learning from each cluster initiative would be distilled nationally and shared as 'free to use' models, frameworks or case studies of effective practice; capturing the guiding/core principles of the work and any inhibiting factors and produced (in the first instance) in the national language.

Transnationally

- Under the continued banner of Screenagers, the lead organisations in the participating countries would:
    - Convene (offline and online) and undertake a "Case Clinic" approach to the various national cluster group training initiatives;
    - Distil the relevant/common enabling factors that are critical to a quality training and learning experience for youth workers – including identifying blockages and barriers; and
    - Promote and disseminate the resulting (free to share) training modules, resources and packages nationally, across the partnership countries and - through other forums and networks - across the EU and beyond.

[1] Low Threshold refers to the everyday use of digital and social media in youth work practice, rather than the 'special project', which can give it the appearance of being separate from, or an add-on to, 'ordinary' or 'traditional' youth work approaches.

Following the launch of this report, these ideas for future EU-level action will be examined and consulted on in more detail, which may lead to the development of new, extended partnership arrangements.

Further resources and reports available at youth.ie/screenagers