

Reducing the net risk to children

May 5 2020, by David Bradley



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Keeping children safe online should be a major priority of internet providers, content creators, and the authorities. Writing in the *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, a team from India has

surveyed international efforts.

To overcome online risks, we need to understand the characteristics of the online ecosystem and to learn how to cope once risks are faced. The online ecosystem involves different stakeholders such as service providers, the physical network, online users being connected, social media sites and tools and technology, the team reports. "Elimination of online risks is difficult," they have found, "but the intensity of risks can be reduced."

Dittin Andrews of the Center for Development of Advanced Computing, in Electronics City, Bangalore, worked with Sreejith Alathur and Naganna Chetty of the National Institute of Technology Karnataka, in Surathkal, Mangalore, on the survey.

With an increase in the availability of rich content over the [internet](#), information and communication technology (ICT) has brought many benefits to users of all ages around the world," the team writes. ICT is transforming societies and economies. It has also attracted children to its benefits, with many regularly accessing social networking sites, playing video games, and sharing videos, for instance. With any positive benefit, there is always a negative, however, and access to the boundless resources of the online world brings with it risks to vulnerable young people. This might be through exposure to inappropriate materials, exploitation through malware or social engineering, cyber-bullying, and even the risk of physical and mental harm when the online world spills into their offline lives.

"International bodies are providing assistance to children online with different tools, technologies, regulations, legal protections, safety resources, education, training, guidance, safety measures, crime reporting system, and child-friendly search engines," the team writes. However, much remains to be done to address the countless risks to

which children are exposed online.

More information: Dittin Andrews et al. International Efforts for Children Online Safety: A Survey, *International Journal of Web Based Communities* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/IJWBC.2020.107146](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJWBC.2020.107146)

Provided by Inderscience

Citation: Reducing the net risk to children (2020, May 5) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-05-net-children.html>

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