

BARRIERS TO E-SAFETY PEER EDUCATION

An analysis of Teacher Concerns

S. ATKINSON, S. FURNELL, A.D. PHIPPEN

*Centre for Security, Communications and Network Research, University of Plymouth,
Plymouth, United Kingdom*

Abstract

Peer education has been considered as a successful strategy for encouraging changing behaviour of young people. However, it is not without its limitations or criticisms. For example, there is potential conflict between how young people evaluate online risks to themselves, compared to adults understanding of online risks. This paper examines the concerns raised by educators captured during dialogue in workshop sessions set up to explore these issues.

The overarching concern is education to encourage responsibility. Encouraging both pupils and parents to take responsibility topped the list, alongside getting parents to understand the issues and to get involved. This was followed by responsibility from other work colleagues and the senior management teams. The blurring of the boundaries of responsibility between school and home were also an issue. Keeping up with the changes in technology whilst delivering suitable, relevant and engaging sessions were followed closely by the desire for research and understanding into how young people make use of the Internet. A number of educators expressed the desire that there should be a balance employed between the issues of restriction and freedom for young people to engage freely with the technologies.

This sample of UK educators had clear concerns about where responsibilities lie for young people, but also a the desire to engage key stakeholders in the young persons life. The anxiety surrounding these issues should ideally be resolved prior to encouraging educators to engage more fully with any e-safety peer education strategies.

Keywords: online safety, peer education, educators concerns

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to offer a contribution to the understanding of barriers to effective e-safety education within the school environment. The specific focus is on educator perceptions of barriers towards their own self-efficacy in the e-safety education situation, taken from the premise that educators are aware they need to provide e-safety education, yet anecdotally from our own research we have experienced many instances where they have felt they weren't adequately informed and equipped to effectively carry out such practice.

Recent years have witnessed an increasing recognition of e-safety as an important issue for young people, with evidence to suggest that they are exposed to a variety of online threats originating from both adults and their peer group. Schools are the focal points for delivering online safety messages [Harris, 2009] and are rising to that challenge by making use of a wealth of materials and support networks [Insafe, 2010, ChildNet, 2010, Becta, 2010, SWGfL, 2010, TeachToday, 2010]. Whilst the focus of this paper is on the UK, it is by no means a UK only phenomenon and has a worldwide influence. Closer to home, online safety is embedded within the curriculum of 23 European Countries [Harris, 2009] and we are seeing an increase in the EU focus of research with the EU Kids Online project providing an overview [Livingstone and Haddon, 2009]. Yet, despite the wealth of resources and expectations the implementation of the online safety curriculum is still lacking [Harris, 2009].

In an ever-changing, technologically complex world, interconnected technologies provide a pervasive communications backbone [Kennedy, et al, 2008]. Many young people grow up accepting this as the norm, finding themselves surrounded by mobile technologies (primarily phones), as well as a variety of personal gaming consoles and traditional computers, all with ready access to the Internet.

Bate [2000] suggests that modern technologies are now responsible for raising awareness about the latest dangers. Scare stories can be transmitted around the world in a very short space of time and so Bate's [ibid] inference is that this creates the perception that we live in a dangerous world. Humans have to take responsibility on whether to share anxieties about the latest dangers. In the media, editors determine what gets published, but in the world of Web 2.0 the individual has a personal responsibility on what to blog, share, link or send to others.

Within the home environment, there is often a gulf of understanding between adults and children [Staksrud et al 2007]. Children are technologically savvy, comfortable with the technologies surrounding them whereas parents struggle. This combination of parental responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in a world promoted by the media to be full of dangers on the Internet, leads parents to the perception that their children are engaging in unsafe activities [Sharples et al, 2008].

Understanding risk is important, allowing for active avoidance of situations that can cause extreme danger or harm. As Furedi [2002] describes, the weighing up of the probability of a risk happening is an informed way of managing that risk. Furedi observes that the fatalistic approach of assuming a risk will happen is eroding parenting skills and impacting child

development. The findings from the Good Childhood Inquiry (reported by Bennett, 2007) would also appear to be support this.

Parental fear of abduction plays a prominent role in the lives of children and their understanding of risk. We now have the result that children are now not allowed the freedom to go outside to play unattended. This is a fear that has potentially been encouraged by the media stories surrounding the abduction of children [Pilcher and Wagg, 1996; Gerrard, 2004; Brook, 2009].

The context within which this paper explores these barriers has a focus around one particular approach to e-safety education that of supporting peer education within a school environment. The discussion begins by highlighting the need for e-safety education, and the potential for utilising peer-based approaches in this context. It then proceeds to examine the methodology and findings from the authors' investigation into educators' attitudes and concerns carried out during workshops with educators. This leads into consideration of the implications and conclusions arising from the findings.

2. E-Safety Education

The context within which educators find themselves responsible for implementing the online safety curriculum is one in which their pupils often spend more time online than they do. Teens are leading the way in making good use of the social web for collaboration on their school work as well as research using the Internet for their homework [Logicalis, 2009]. Children predominantly use the Internet at home rather than in school, with 65% using the family computer and one third of the respondents using their own computer [EU, 2008]. However as increasing numbers of parents turn to filtering and blocking software, both of these environments, the school and home, are becoming increasingly locked down and filtered [OFCOM, 2009].

Within UK schools, the technical infrastructure is overseen by the National Education Network (www.nen.gov.uk), and a consortium of regional broadband providers provides filtering, monitoring and blocking software for the schools in different areas of the country. The infrastructure utilises the Internet Watch Foundation blacklist of potentially illegal websites to ensure that children within schools do not access harmful content.

Not only is there a predominance of Internet use within the home environment as mentioned above, but the lives of young people is characterised by a complex interconnected world with a tremendous underlying communications backbone [Kennedy, 2008]. Mobile devices abound and personal computers are evident in many types, shapes and sizes. Ofcom reports that young people enter their teens having amassed a large amount of their own technology with dedicated laptops, desktops alongside digital TV and a selection of gaming consoles providing the means to go online [Lennox, 2008].

We can see therefore, that there is a tension between balancing the opportunities that being online can offer against the potential for harm. Opportunities that are to be embraced are seen in terms of the global contact, the understanding between cultures, increase in

participation and the access to a wealth of information [Harris, 2009]. However, the risks loom large with media portrayals of serious risk of harm [Panorama, 2008, Stokes, 2010] added to the focus of campaigns such as ThinkUKnow programme [CEOP, 2007] which emphasise the dangers of online stalking and grooming. These factors add to a concern by risk-averse adults who work hard to avoid these “worst-case” scenarios [Sharples, Graber, Harrison and Logan, 2009] and hence contribute to an immediate barrier to overcome when teaching young people about e-safety.

Encouraging information or media literacy is seen as an important approach to e-safety [Richardson, 2009] in the light of the differing levels of risk that EU teenagers face online [Livingstone and Haddon, 2009]. Guiding young people in developing a natural resilience and ensuring they behave online in a positive and appropriate manner requires appropriate supportive parental interactions [Valcke, De Wever, Rots, 2010]. However, these are often hindered by the very strategies designed to minimise the risks to young people [Livingstone and Haddon, 2009].

Within the EU Kids Online final report, Livingstone et al [2009] illustrate the need for more research based around educators’ skills, literacy, mediating practices in the classroom with consideration towards the effectiveness of their role in improving children’s risk awareness and online safety. Educators are seen as key as to how they support children online with suggestion that a wider array of child-centred activities need to be created so that children can make informed choices online.

3. Peer Support

The wealth of awareness raising activities mean that young people know how to keep safe online, but they do not necessarily use the strategies they have learnt [Atkinson et al, 2009a, NFER, 2009]. Schools deliver online safety sessions, yet young people still express a need for more advice [Harris, 2009, Selwyn, Potter and Cranmer, 2010, Eynon, 2009, Phippen, 2009a]. One approach is to encourage positive behaviour using some form of peer support. Research [Phippen, 2009b] has shown that it is often the case that young people will turn to their peers to resolve issues around eSafety. In this particular case, young people were more likely to turn to their peers to resolve problems related to sexting than any other support group. Therefore, there is a premise for this is that young people who support each other will build upon their own knowledge. This approach of utilising key strategies that engage young people directly rather than an initiative that relies on parents to restrict or ban their children from being online is more likely to succeed [Tynes, 2007].

Engaging with young people and making use of peer education approaches has also been a key theme emerging from the e-safety literature. The Byron Review [2007] recommends incorporating the youth voice, while Becta [2009] recommend peer involvement in formulating acceptable use policy documents. Youth panels have emerged, with examples including the CEOP youth advisory panel, South West Grid for Learning youth panel and Childnet Internet Governance Forum [2010]. These initiatives include young people at high levels of policy making and for the provision of key resources, generally integrated into the development process through open dialogue and focus group activities. One criticism is that they often include young people who are articulate and engaged, another is that engagement is generally originated from adults and lead on issues they wish to explore

which can be viewed as influencing discussion to ensure the “correct” outcomes are met. There is also the potential for tokenistic engagement by young people where they are invited to participate yet are not directly empowered to do so. There is therefore, a need to encourage peer support at the grass roots level, engaging directly in the environment where young people are situated, where a wider diversity of attitudes and activities is likely to be represented and discourse is originated from the young people themselves.

Peer education has been noted as a successful strategy for encouraging changing behaviour in other fields, such as health care and sexual health and youth work [Dodge and Prinstein, 2008; Davies and Cranston, 2008]. Concerns have however been raised about lack of evidence of the effectiveness of peer support, pointing out that whilst there is a large ground swell of support, there is little in the way of clear evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions and projects [Parkin and McKeganey, 2000]. Nonetheless, involving a similar group of individuals to motivate and support each other is an increasingly popular approach utilised over a period of time in different areas of anti-bullying work [Naylor and Cowie, 1999, BeatBullying, 2010, Almeida, Correia, Marinho, 2010].

Challenging young people’s behaviour and emphasising the consequences has emerged as an important consequence of the University of Plymouth online safety work. Young people engage far more when the message is directly relevant to them, and we saw significantly greater evidence of engagement once we were able to demonstrate direct links to their own public online persona [Atkinson et al, 2009]. A challenge from a peer who understands not only the context but also about online safety can therefore be argued to be very powerful.

What is important here though is how young people evaluate the online risks. The gap between the perceived risks of adults and how young people perceive those risks needs to be explored [NFER, 2009]. If adults perceptions of risk are based around media scare stories as mentioned above, then young people will choose not to heed the warnings of those adults (believing that they are better informed due to being more fully engaged with the technology, rather than drawing on third party information) and so instead will choose to turn to their friends.

4. Methodology

The themes of e-safety education combined with peer support warrant further exploration and this paper considers them from the perspective of how to implement such approaches within the curriculum. Given the arguments surrounding limitations of implementing e-safety education [Harris, 2009, Livingstone and Haddon, 2009] it would appear to be most appropriate to explore perceptions of barriers to implementation. To this end, data collected from participants within the UK education sector were considered in more depth from a phenomenological perspective in order to explore the intricacies of the context [Ciborra, 2006].

The focus of the analysis was on how to identify the barriers to teacher’s self-efficacy – that is the individual’s judgement on their own ability to organise and carry out a course of action [Bandura, 1986]. The data was collected during the course of a series of workshops held as part of an e-safety conference in the South West of England. Three workshops in different

locations in the South West were carried out with around 30 participants in each one. Workshops were held within a wider educators e-safety conference series provided by the South West Grid for Learning (the National Education Network provider for the South West of England). As such, we can assume that subjects already showed an interest in the subject area as a result of their attendance at the conferences and had gained some prior knowledge from the previous sessions. Workshops were advertised to all conference attendees who chose which ones they wished to attend. The workshops in which this research was carried out was advertised as a workshop exploring issues in e-safety peer education and educator confidence in supporting such schemes. Each workshop took 1 and a half hours and started with an introductory presentation showing general issues around e-safety education (drawing from both literature and our own research results) prior to presenting the thesis that peer education is an effective means of developing e-safety knowledge among young people. This was supported through initial findings of our peer-education project which demonstrated the value of the approach. The workshop then presented the participants with an opportunity to engage in the discussion through being posed the question:

“What are your challenges regarding managing and delivering effective e-safety?”.

Respondents were invited to record their thoughts on the question on post-it notes and to place them on flipchart paper around the room. These responses were then discussed further as a group as respondents shared their own experiences and concerns with the rest of the group. These responses were collated and then analysed using broad terms derived from the concepts that build into self-efficacy [Kang, 2009]. These were:

- Personal Ability
- Context and Opportunities
- Goals
- Resources

Quantitative measures were used as a way of illustrating a comparison of occurrence between the categories and showing key trends in the opinions of our participants. However, given the relatively small sample size, these are used as indicative statistics to show the range of responses, rather than developing generalisable statistics that could be extrapolated to other populations.

4.1 Personal Ability

Personal ability is seen to be a core element of self-efficacy [Kang, 2009]. This category explored how the respondents viewed their own skills and abilities prior to contemplating the other categories described below. Whilst there are many influencing factors on a person's self-judgement, it is not in the remit of this paper to explore in any depth those other factors. Therefore, when coding them the responses were taken at face value so as to minimise the subjective influence of the researchers' interpretation.

This category did not decompose further into any subcategories.

4.2 Context and Opportunities

As described by Bandura [1986] an individual's belief of self-efficacy is highly context dependent. Responses were coded into this category by considering the surrounding environment, external factors and occasions when opportunities arose to carry out certain activities.

This category lent itself to further decomposition as the context was viewed in terms of behaviour by other individuals and the self, the environment and the perceptions of other individuals.

4.3 Goals

Goals have been described as a major component of self-efficacy which help people build their own beliefs and whereby they consider how effective they can be in delivering that goal [Fredin and David, 1998, Kang, 2009]. These goals provide the standards by which individuals measure their own achievements and performance and provide the wherewithal for people to judge their own capabilities. As the data was coded, the responses were considered in terms of what the respondents were trying to achieve within their setting. Any responses that articulated particular standards fell into this category along with a consideration as to the appropriateness of the goal being described.

Responses within this category were found to fall into three separate areas; namely educating, engagement and protecting.

4.4 Resources

Resources are an important element of empowering individuals to carry out their course of action. This category explored the individual's perceptions towards resources that were necessary or lacking.

Responses within this category did fall into four separate areas, that of hardware, people, school context and time

5. Findings

As the responses were analysed, in three of the broad concept areas a further set of concepts emerged that denoted a form of barrier. A barrier is considered as anything that inhibits an individual from carrying out a recommended course of action [Witte, 2000]. Each of the broad areas is discussed here in turn.

Figure 1 illustrates the proportions of the responses within the different categories. As can be seen, the majority concerned the goals of the respondents. Goals as described above fell into three distinct areas concerning themselves with how to educate, how to engage and how to protect. Following on were concerns about the context within which the educators found themselves. Interestingly personal ability and resources comprised a far smaller element of the responses.

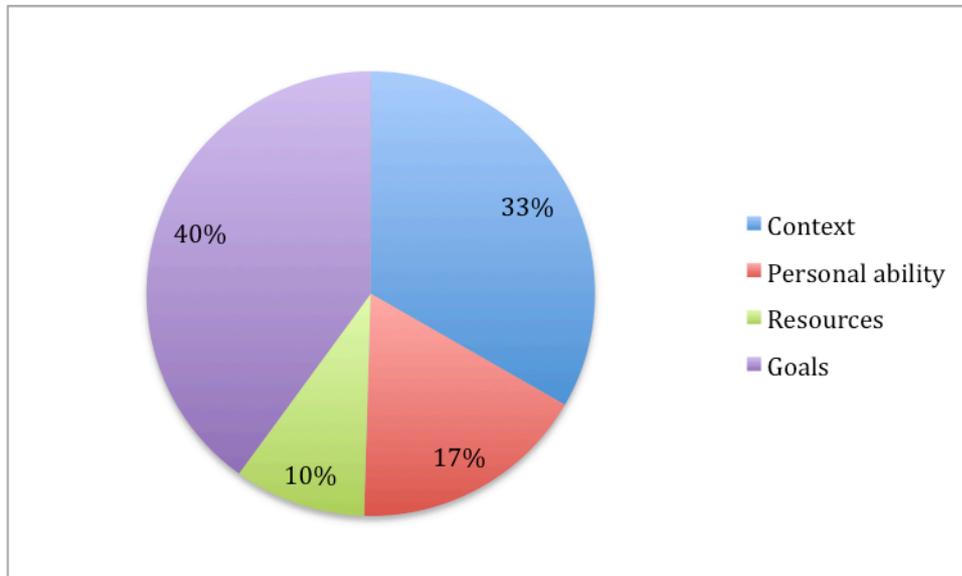


Figure 1: Breakdown of the main response categories

5.1 Goals

Contemplation of their goals represented the largest category of responses. Within these responses it became evident that there were three key areas that respondents felt provided a number of barriers. These were in educating a variety of individuals, engaging with parents and protecting the young people in their care.

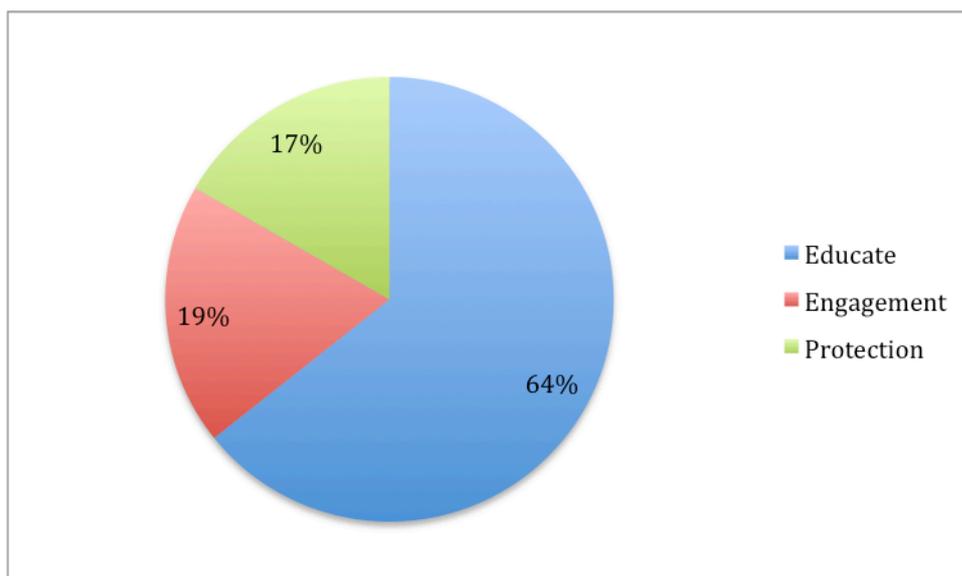


Figure 2: Breakdown of the main goal categories

As would be expected, educating pupils was articulated as a primary goal for these respondents. Their concerns were to make the education of the pupils as interesting as possible so as not to disengage them. The barriers that were considered were to find out what the young people already knew so that they could plan around that knowledge. In addition, a further barrier was seen to be that of the age differential between the pupil and the educator.

“Getting the message over to children about safeguarding themselves – through someone they don’t think is too old to know how they feel”.

The beliefs and perceptions of the pupils were seen as a barrier to the goals of educating them and the suggestion to overcome this was to begin the teaching of e-safety earlier in primary school. A description was made of the need to convince young people of the need to be educated about e-safety, that they should be made aware of the risks, one of the barriers to which was the fact that they tended not to believe that the risks were real or that they would become victims.

As mentioned below in the section on personal ability, the respondents articulated a goal to maintain credibility. They saw this as key to delivering the message in an interesting way but saw issues in developing and delivering relevant information to maintain that credibility. A clear view emerged that it needed to be more than a once only event.

“Ensuring that we as teachers remain credible with students”

However, achieving that goal brought about a number of dilemmas requiring that there be a balance in actions. One respondent pondered about the balance between a restrictive

approach (with controls on behaviour) as against ensuring education and knowledge. Another stated:

“The challenge is to find the happy medium, walled garden versus filtered cell”

Educating parents was also seen as a much-needed goal. Concerns were raised around being able to educate parents and carers in such a way that the young person themselves were not alienated. Another respondent alluded to the issue that children were much more at risk at home than at school and so felt the goal of educating the parents should help mitigate that. However, another respondent felt the goal of encouraging a less restrictive parental behaviour was important:

“Convincing parents that banning the computer/internet is not the answer”

Parents as the targets for education goals were not the only consideration, and any form of engagement with parents was considered as a challenge. Some respondents questioned how they could achieve their goals of engaging with parents in a proactive way, encouraging them to take responsibility and getting them involved. A question was asked whether parents knew what their children were doing online:

“Challenge is how to encourage parents to become active in providing a balanced education of e-safety”

Finally respondents felt very keenly the issues around their role in protecting young people, questioning how they were to achieve the goal of preventing misuse that impacts upon others. The dilemma between banning technology as apposed to empowering young people to find socially safe spaces to explore was described:

“How much protection vs. how much empowerment?”

“Empower the students or protect them? Can we do both?”

“Giving children greater access via devices such as games consoles securely”

5.2 Context and Opportunities

The respondents' consideration of the context they find themselves in broadly fell into three separate sub-categories, the frequencies of which are shown in Figure 3. These were around the perceptions of the individuals they encountered, the behaviour of a variety of individuals and the environment within which they were situated.

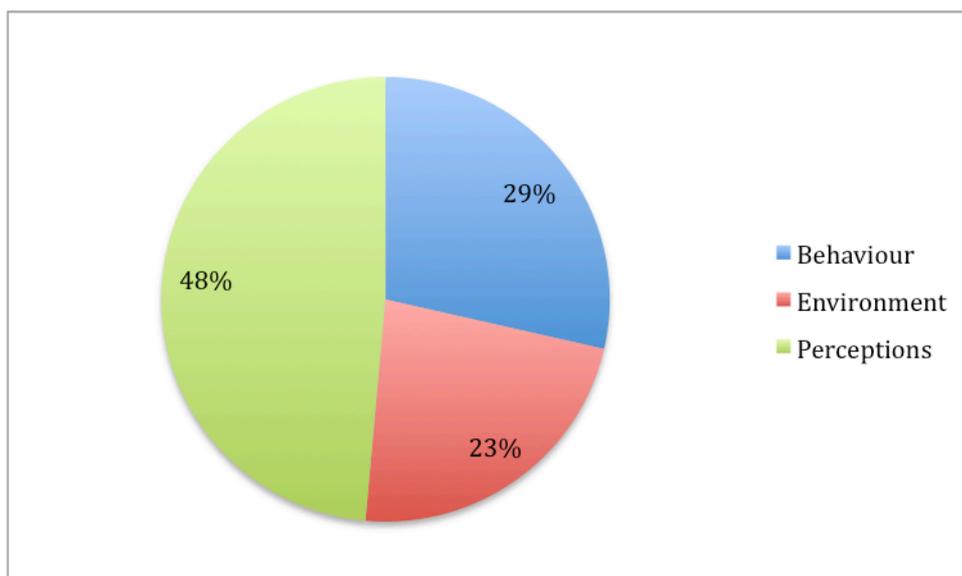


Figure 3: Breakdown of the context categories

The biggest section of this category concerned itself with perceptions and included both that of parents and pupils, as well as the perceptions that the respondents held themselves and their view of societal perceptions in general.

Linked in with the goal of educating the parents, the respondents described barriers to achieving those goals due to the views and opinions of this audience. The lack of parental awareness was described in conjunction with thoughts about action required by the school:

“[They] don’t see it as an issue for them. School’s responsibility to educate. Lack of parental knowledge/understanding.”

“Majority of our parents are unaware of what is going on. They expect us to manage the safety when at home and vet for them.”

Another respondent saw the problem as being situated in the parental understanding of risk, considering that parents were only aware of a small percentage of the actual risks that young people were exposed to when going online. This again ties in with the difference in perceptions of risk between the key players within this field (i.e. the educators, the pupils and the parents):

“Enormous mismatch between concerns of kids and that of parents. Kids concerned with cyberbullying, MSN and P2P issues. Parents concerned with inappropriate contact = HUGE gap in perceived issues”

As might be expected, pupil perceptions played a big role in the concerns of the educators. Descriptions were given about the denial attitude of some young people who felt that they

were clever enough to not allow any risks to affect them. One respondent alluded to something they term as a “dinosaur theory”, whereby the pupils knew more than the older educator. Another remarked about the problem working with young people who think they know it all and that the educator knew nothing. The age of the pupils was also a contributory factor, whereby once young people reach secondary school age they perceive they have seen it and done it and that the e-safety education at this stage is too late.

Influence on perceptions was also seen not just from the pupils and parents, but also from society in general and in addition self-perception. Risk was prominent, with questions posed about the level or quantity of risk from Web 2.0 activity, or about how many ways young people could potentially be at risk online. One respondent felt the risks of the net were seen to outweigh the rewards, while another alluded to a common response to technological change, that of the concept of moral panic, the feeling expressed in a population about something that will have a detrimental influence on the social order [Cohen, 1973]:

“Moral panic is nothing new – it’s a common response to technological change”.

Moving on from perceptions, behaviours were also seen to provide barriers and fell into two main areas, that of the behaviour of colleagues and as would be expected, pupils. Respondents described barriers in terms of senior management and colleagues not taking responsibility or not taking the issue of e-safety seriously enough:

“Lack of understanding from more experienced members of staff and sometimes unwillingness to change their views”
“Battle the withdrawal attitude with senior management luddites”

Interestingly pupil behaviour was not felt to be quite so much of an issue as that of lack of support from the senior management teams. Two particular types of pupil behaviour were mentioned, that of circumventing the filtering controls using proxy servers and that of linking to many friends. One respondent felt that perhaps there was a lot of pupil behaviour of concern that was unknown:

“I think use of the Internet is mostly OK, but could be like an iceberg as a lot of student use may be unknown to schools and parents”

The final aspect of the context was seen in terms of the balance between the home and the school environment. As could be seen by the goals articulated, respondents were well aware of potential to young people risk at home in terms of e-safety, but were concerned about how much the school should get involved in this context. One respondent remarked that although education was carried out in the school, there was still a differentiation between home and school in acceptable pupil behaviour that had to be accounted for.

Within the school environment, respondents considered the impact of training facilities and how to raise the awareness of adults. Barriers and restrictive practices also caused problems:

“How can we use technology to further learning whilst we are banning it? Eg: mobile phones”

“In enhancing the use of ICT in education we are promoting its use but face the barriers of school interpretations of e-safety.”

5.3 Personal Ability

The responses within this category represented the respondents' view of their own skills and abilities within the e-safety context. Taking the above-mentioned goal of maintaining credibility of the educator in the eyes of the pupil, there were a number of barriers that were described. The two key themes were that of keeping up to date with the very fast changing pace of the technology field, and that of the personal knowledge and understanding of the educators themselves.

As mentioned above, the pace of change of technology is phenomenal and it is this change that concerned the respondents:

“Keeping up with new uses and methods (idea of mashing things together).”

“Keeping up to date with changes in technology and what children are using”

Social networking sites were specifically mentioned in terms of understanding how young people made use of them and understanding that use. One respondent remarked at the difficulty in keeping up to date with how young people made use of social networks especially as they had no desire to engage with the site.

“Keeping up to date myself as I don't use these technologies personally - don't want Social Networking site”

This respondent touches on a debate that is happening regarding whether educators should have social networking sites or not. The Childnet [2009] advice for educators is to be very careful and not link to their students. As illustrated by the response above, some educators would rather not engage with the phenomena at all, but it could be argued that a personal engagement with the topic (and technologies) needs to be made in order to properly understand all of the potential issues and nuances involved.

The next concern of the respondents was their own personal understanding of the technologies and how they were used. They saw their lack of understanding providing a barrier to their credibility in teaching the topic matter.

“I might not know the correct answer to their questions”

“I might not be familiar with the technology”

“Need confidence to be credible to get young people engaged – biggest boundary – upskill about social networking”

There is a consequent onus upon schools to support related staff development and (in some cases) to consider suitable provision of the related technologies in order to more explicitly assist their staff in keeping pace.

5.4 Resources

Responses in this category considered the barriers to delivery in terms of what provision there was in terms of physical artefacts, the hardware or network facsimiles, and the allocation of time to provide space. One response remarked upon the number of people trained and another considered the school as a whole. The proportions are illustrated in Figure 4.

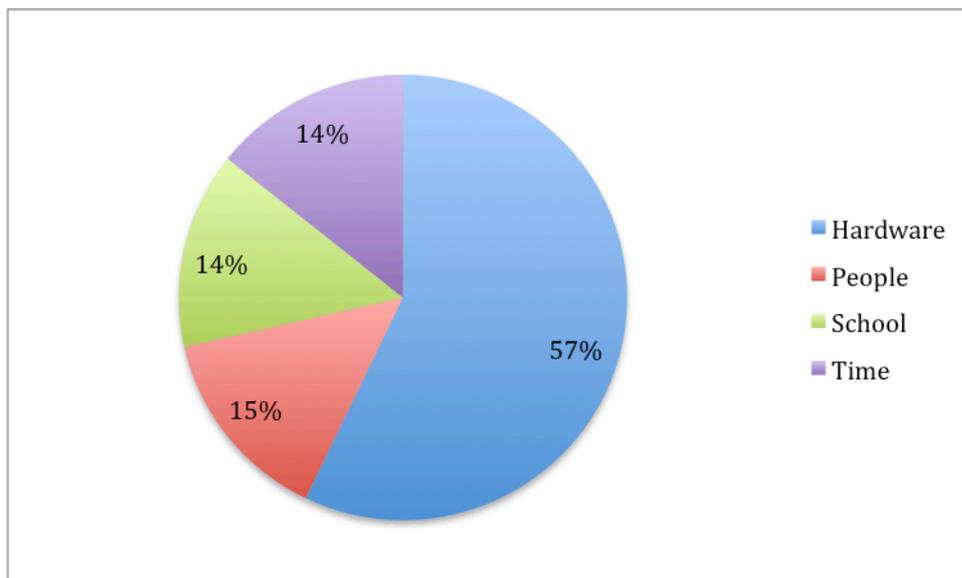


Figure 4: Breakdown of resources categories

In this instance the category for hardware also concerns the effectiveness of the network filtering system. Concern was raised about how to encourage the organisation to make investment not only in hardware, but also in staff training time. Getting the balance between filtering and monitoring was also considered.

Training time and time for delivery were seen as issues with comment made to providing enough time within the timetable to make delivery effective, allocating time and resources to ensure the goals of e-safety provision were good enough. One respondent remarked not only on finding the time to teach but also questioned the motivations of other colleagues, a concept that crossed the barriers of all the elements influencing self-efficacy:

“Finding the time to teach it in an already busy curriculum. Having to either teach it across the whole school or train unwilling staff to teach it, especially those who are anti-web”

6. Conclusions

This paper has sought to gain an understanding about potential barriers surrounding the delivery of e-safety education, an approach considered given the literature on limitations in the curriculum delivery, the rich source of resources and the different approaches to e-safety education. The focus was on the perceptions of the educators and considered in terms of self-efficacy primarily based around the theme of peer education for e-safety.

The self-efficacy of educators concentrated on how to deliver their goals. Barriers were identified in achieving the goal to educate various stakeholders along with treading the fine line between school and home. Parents emerged as a key element to both education and engagement.

A need to take at least some level of responsibility for young people at home was alluded to, with the education and engagement of the parents being seen as an important coping strategy. Whilst frustration may have been detected in how to engage effectively with parents, it was clear that educators were very aware of the need not only to protect their pupils, but also to encourage a much needed resilience.

Barriers were seen in the environment and context that educators found themselves especially in terms of the perceptions of the individuals around them. The combination of senior management, government and parental abdication of responsibility provided for one particular type of barrier to effective delivery of goals and affecting the educator's personal ability. The perceptions and attitudes of the pupils themselves were seen as relatively minimal in comparison.

Educators were concerned about their own abilities to keep their skills up to date within an ever-changing technological environment. Given the criticism described above with regard to educators, it is not surprising to hear their own concerns in this area. However, these concerns did not appear as often as the concerns on how to deliver their goals, or the issues surrounding the context.

Despite the limitations of phenomenological coding of qualitative data, that of accounting for the subjectivity of the coder and the data being that of people's self judgement of their own abilities, this paper has provided some further indication as to the nature of some of the barriers to e-safety education faced by UK educators.

It was not surprising that the aspect of self-efficacy that was prominent in these responses was on how to achieve the goals. The respondents were individuals that had chosen to engage in a continuing professional development activity and therefore would naturally lean towards concern over how to deliver their responsibilities.

Given the focus of this paper was on educator self-efficacy, it has sought to explore potential barriers in one specific situation, the UK education context. The barriers have been described in detail above and can be seen as the result of taking the viewpoint of the educator. By conceptualising the different elements of self-efficacy these barriers have now

emerged as a potential route to explore in a systematic fashion with the aim of removing or minimising them to provide more effective e-safety provision.

The implications of our findings are far reaching. We can clearly demonstrate a group of educators who feel that it is their professional responsibility to educate young people in their care in safer internet practices. However, it is also clear that this same group do not feel they are equipped to achieve this and often feel that young people are the “leaders” in this milieu and educators do not have the authority, or are able to present an authoritative presence, in engaging their pupils. While peer education does bring in young people more pro-actively within the educational context, it requires teaching staff to work with the young people to ensure consistency and effective knowledge development. If the educators lack confidence in the subject area, it is likely that peer education schemes will not be as successful.

Previous research [Phippen 2009a] has shown that educators are spreading e-safety education across the curriculum where they feel they have “a space” to deliver it, but consistency and content of delivery, is extremely fragmented. This work supports this finding and contributes to our knowledge related to practitioner awareness of the subject area. If there was clear policy direction related to e-safety curriculum, supported by effective professional development, educators would be in a more effective space to support young people in developing their own knowledge related to safer Internet practices. While our research has shown that there is great potential for peer education in e-safety curriculum, without confident, knowledgeable staff to support such schemes, they will not realise their full potential.

7. References

Almeida, A., Correia, I. & Marinho, S. (2010). Moral Disengagement, Normative Beliefs of Peer Group, and Attitudes Regarding Roles in Bullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 9(1), 23-36.

Atkinson, S., Furnell, S., & Phippen, A. (2009a). Securing the next generation: enhancing e-safety awareness among young people. *Computer Fraud & Security*, 2009(7), 13-19.

Atkinson, S, Furnell, S, Phippen, AD, (2009b), Using Peer-education to encourage safe online behaviour, June 2009, LSE EU Kids Online, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EUKidsOnline/Conference%20papers.htm>

Atkinson, S., Furnell, S. and Phippen, A. (2009c). Investigating Attitudes Towards Online Safety and Security, and Evaluating a Peer-led Internet Safety Programme for 14-to 16-Year-Olds: Final Report. Coventry: BECTA [online]. Available: http://partners.becta.org.uk/upload-dir/downloads/page_documents/research/reports/online_safety_security.pdf

Bandura, A., (1986), Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive view. New Jersey : Prentice-Hall.

Bate, R (2000) *Life's Adventure: Virtual Risk in a Real World*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.

BeatBullying, (2010) Cybermentors, <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

Becta, (2009), AUPs in context: Establishing safe and responsible online behaviours, <http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=39286>

Becta, (2010), Next Generation Learning, Safeguarding Learners, <http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/safeguarding>

Bennett, (2007) Children who have everything, except the freedom to play outside. The Times Online. http://women.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/women/families/article1884426.ece
Accessed 29th April 2009

Brook, S, (2009), , Guardian online. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/apr/28/daily-express-peter-hill-mps>. Accessed 29th April 2009

Byron, T (2007) *Safer Children in a Digital World*. London: UK Government.

CEOP, (2007a) Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, www.ceop.gov.uk.

Childnet, (2009), Cyberbullying: Supporting school staff. <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00242-2009>

Childnet, (2010), Childnet International, <http://www.childnet-int.org/>

Ciborra, C. (2006). Imbrication of Representations: Risk and Digital Technologies*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(6), 1339-1356.

Cohen, S. (1973). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. St Albans: Paladin

Davies, T., and Cranston, P., (2008), *Youth Work and Social Networking: Final research report*. National Youth Agency. September 2008. <http://blogs.nya.org.uk/ywsn/final-report.html>.

Dodge, K, Prinstein, M., (2008), *Understanding Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents*. Guilford Publications, New York.

EU, (2008), Eurobarometer, Towards a Safer Use of the Internet for children in the EU – a parents perspective.
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/surveys/quantitative/index_en.htm

Eynon, R. (2009). Harnessing Technology: the Learner and their Context. Mapping young people's uses of technology in their own contexts – a nationally representative survey. Coventry: BECTA.

Fredin, E.S., and David, P., (1998), Browsing and the hypermedia interaction cycle: A model of self-efficacy and goal dynamics. *Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75(1), 35 – 54

Furedi, F (2002) Paranoid Parenting. Chicago: Chicago Review Press Inc.

Gerrard, N (2004) Soham: A Story of our Times. Short Books, London.

Harris, R, (2009), Assessment report on the status of online safety education in schools across Europe.
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/forum_oct_2009/assessment_report.pdf

Insafe, (2010), Insafe, <http://www.saferinternet.org/web/guest/home>

Kang, Y. (2009) "Self-Efficacy: What to Influence and How to Influence it?" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Sheraton New York, New York City, NY Online 2009-05-25 from
http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p11854_index.html

Kennedy, T.L.M., Smith, A., Wells, A.T. and Wellman, B. 2008. Networked Families. October 2008. www.pewinternet.org/PDF/r/266/report_display.asp

Lennox, F. 2008. Growing up in a digital society: Children and Young People's Media Literacy Skills, Ofcom, WISEKIDS, Swansea, 20th October 2008.
<http://www.wisekids.org.uk/conf/speakers/presentations/fionalen-noxSwansea2008.pdf>

Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., (2009). EU Kids Online: Final Report, London: LSE,
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EUKidsOnline/Reports/EUKidsOnlineFinalReport.pdf>

Logicalis, (2009), Realtime Generation Survey, 2009. A Summation of all fears. Logicalis UK, <http://www.uk.logicalis.com/knowledge-share/uk-realtime-generation-report.aspx>

Naylor, P., Cowie, H., (1999), The effectiveness of peer support systems in challenging school bullying: The perspectives and experiences of teachers and pupils. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 467 – 479.

NFER, (2009), *Children's Online Risks and Safety: A Review of the available evidence*. London: UKCCIS, http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis/download.cfm?catstr=research&downloadurl=COJ%20Report_ps.pdf

OFCOM, (2009a), *Digital Lifestyles: Parents of children under 16*, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrssi/digilifestyles/

Panorama, (2008) *One click from capture*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/7416621.stm>.

Parkin, S., McKeganey, N., (2000), *The Rise and Rise of Peer Education Approaches, Drugs: education, prevention and policy*. Vol 7 No. 3, 2000.

Pilcher, J and Wagg, S, (1996) *Thatcher's children?: politics, childhood and society in the 1980s and 1990s*, Routledge, London.

Phippen, A. (2009a). *E-safety Policy: A Survey of School e-Safety Policy and Practice in the South West of the UK*. Exeter: South West Grid for Learning

Phippen, A. (2009b). *Sharing Personal Images and Videos Among Young People*. Exeter: South West Grid for Learning

Richardson, J, (2009), *What is information and media literacy*, 3rd International Conference "Keeping Children and Young People Safe Online", 29-30 September 2009, Warsaw, http://konferencja.saferinternet.pl/static/safer_video_en2009.php?day=30&part=1richardson

Selwyn, N., Potter, J. and Cranmer, S. (2010). *Primary Schools and ICT: Learning from Pupil Perspectives*. London: Continuum.

Sharples, M., Graber, R., Harrison, C. and Logan, K. (2009). 'E-safety and web 2.0 for children aged 11-16', *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 25, 1, 7084.

Staksrud, E, Livingstone, S, & Haddon, L (2007) *What Do We Know About Children's Use of Online Technologies? EC Safer Internet Plus Programme*, London: EU Kids Online.

Stokes, (2010), Ashleigh Hall: 'one mistake' cost teenager her life, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/7398085/Ashleigh-Hall-one-mistake-cost-teenager-her-life.html>

SWGfL, (2010), South West Grid for Learning, Staying Safe, <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe>

Symantec, (2009), Norton Online Living Report, 2009, <http://nortononlineliving.com/>

Teach Today, (2010), TeachToday, <http://www.teachtoday.eu>.

Tynes, B.M. 2007. Internet Safety Gone Wild? Sacrificing the Educational and Psychosocial Benefits of Online Social Environments. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. Vol. 22. No. 6. November 2007.

Valcke, M., Bonte, S., De Wever, B., & Rots, I. Internet parenting styles and the impact on Internet use of primary school children. *Computers & Education, In Press, Corrected Proof*.

Witte, K., Meyer, G., & Martell, D (2000), *Effective Health Risk Messages: A Step by step guide*. California: Sage publications.