Three lessons about Internet use

Children need Internet skills

The Internet is a part of everyday life. For children and adolescents it is a crucial part of friendship, play and school. Things occurring on the Internet are present in the talk and actions of children in and out of school. Skills needed on the Internet don't develop by themselves. Time needs to be taken out of the lesson for learning a safe, participative and responsible way of using the Internet.

Children should be encouraged to seek and utilize the positive opportunities of the Web. The more experience and knowledge of Internet-use a child has, the more responsible he or she will be online.

Internet and media cannot be separated from the individual subjects in the curriculum. Media Education has to be integrated in all subjects, because media is connected to all areas of life. In each separate subject, media can be viewed from a different perspective.

The teacher does not need to be an Internet wizard in order to get students to ponder over their Internet skills. The teacher's role is to inspire discussion and thoughts. The most important is that the teacher is aware that the Internet is a major part of children's' lives.
Instructions for using the material

This material contains three lesson plans. Each lesson is built around a story related to the Internet. The narrative approach is thought provoking, which deepens the learning experience.

The videos related to the stories can be downloaded at Media Skills School (will be opened later). In case the video can't be shown, the teacher can simply read the story out loud. A computer, a video projector and speakers will be needed for watching the video.

Stop the video before the next sub-heading. Discuss the clip in class before moving on to the next one. The lesson is supposed to be dialogic. Therefore the material is best suited for smaller groups. We recommend a class size of 30 max students.

One story, including discussions, will require a 45-minute lesson. There is an active assignment included in the beginning and end of each lesson plan. They can be included if there is time to spare, or if you have more time reserved than 45 minutes. However, we recommend some kind of warm-up assignment to start the lesson, especially if the students don't know each other or the teacher that well.

At the end of each lesson plan you will find background information about the themes of the lesson. We suggest that the teacher read the background information in advance.

The themes and target groups of the stories

In the story for each age group, a few themes related to Internet use are highlighted. The purpose of the stories is not to teach all necessary Internet-skills in one lesson, but to focus on relevant issues for that specific age group.

The stories cover issues that have emerged in studies regarding Internet use among children. For example the Children's Media Barometer 2011 concludes that among first graders the most popular websites are game sites. One third of boys, and one fourth of girls in the first grade, play games online on a daily basis. Game websites are also the most used Internet service among boys in the third grade, whereas girls of the same age spend time on sites where you can dress up your own characters. Fifth graders, on the other hand, behave more like teenagers than children online: they are active in social media and on video hosting services.

The story aimed at students in the first and second grade focuses on games online. The story is about Sampo, who plays online games actively. Sometimes his homework is left undone. The story deals with playing games, addiction, friendship, and rules of using the Internet.
The story aimed at students in the third and fourth grade is about Anni, whose friend creates an online paper doll account on her behalf. Soon Anni is bashed, and someone has bought new clothes for her doll. The themes of the story are bullying, friendship, passwords, and using money on the Internet.

The story aimed at students in the fifth through seventh grades is about Riikka, who joins a social networking service. Her wish is to meet a boyfriend, and after a while she starts getting messages from nice-looking boys. The themes of the story are publicity online, the privacy settings of online services, meeting an Internet friend, and bullying.

1st Story: Let’s play together?
This story is aimed at students in the first and second grade

Video in YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlvW8O9B8Hs

The aim of the lesson

The aim of the story is to discuss playing games as a part of everyday life and acknowledging the people in your life. Rather than talking about game addiction together with the students in the first and second grade, focus is on the fluency of daily routines. In the story, domestic chores and homework are recognized as important routines that you are still learning in the early grades.
The story opens up for discussion on features of online games, and on the children's thoughts on playing the games. The story is also about being considerate of others, and how to build team spirit in the class.

After the lesson

- The students understand that playing games is a hobby among others
- The students understand that homework and domestic chores are more important than playing games
- The students understand that playing too much may lead to problems

The structure of the lesson

1. Warm-up assignment (about five minutes)
2. Video (video length: six minutes, reserve at least 25 minutes for discussions)
3. Final assignment (about 10 minutes)

The progression of the lesson

1) START OF LESSON

Start by asking the students easy questions related to games. The questions will set them in the right mood and get them intrigued with the story about Sampo.

- Have you been playing computer or video games lately?
- What kind of games do you enjoy?
- Do you play games online?
- Do girls and boys play different types of games?
- Do you have any rules at home regarding games?

2) THE VIDEO

First Clip: HOME ALONE

Sampo is used to spending time by himself after school, because his parents work late. Luckily, Mum leaves a snack for Sampo in the fridge; he can happily munch on his sandwiches as soon as he gets home. Afterwards, Sampo likes to get on the computer and play free online games. He has even created his own character on a game site and has made many friends there with the other players’ characters.
Out of all the characters that Sampo knows in the Agent Ninja–game, his has the highest score. Now he wants to win in another game that has been difficult because of the challenging combat techniques. Now and then Sampo wonders whether some of his classmates also play the Agent Ninja–game, but he has not dared to ask; Sampo is worried that they will start laughing at his gaming hobby.

Sampo does not have much in common with the other boys in his class anyway, because for most of them their hobbies are playing football and ice hockey after school. Sampo has not had the courage to join in the sports, because he feels that he is left alone in team sports. For Sampo, PE classes on their own are a horror and a cause of many embarrassing situations.

Pause the story and discuss with the students:
- Why would Sampo rather spend time by the computer than with other children?
- Why is Sampo ashamed of his hobby?
- How does playing outside differ from playing online?
- What kind of video games can you play together with a friend?

You can also ask these questions:
- What kind of gym class do you think Sampo could like?
- Why do games have age ratings? What do the age ratings tell you?
- What kinds of games are suitable for someone Sampo’s age?

Second Clip: Gaming is Addictive

One day Sampo comes home from school as usual, and reads a text message from Mum.

‘Hey Sampo! Don’t forget to tidy up your room and do your homework after you’ve had your snack.”

Sampo eats the sandwiches that Mum has made, and turns on the computer again. Someone else has hit the high score in Agent Ninja, and Sampo gets nervous. How on earth can he defeat that scheming character now?

Sampo keeps on playing as he tries to get more and more points. Being nervous does not help, and Sampo cannot even reach his previous scores. He forgets that time is running and that he should be doing his homework as well. Playing does not even feel like fun anymore, it feels like he is playing just because he has to reach the first place again.
Hi there! I’m the Net Reindeer Mirtsu – and by the way, I’m pretty awesome! However, I’m not here to chat about myself; I wanted to talk about Sampo’s addiction to gaming. He’s run with it like one of Rudolf’s colleagues on Christmas Eve! Homework still is not done, his room is a mess and Mum and Dad will soon be home. What a tricky situation!

Sampo remembers the text that Mum sent. Alarmed, he checks his watch and starts to tidy up his room. The room is soon in decent order. Sampo’s timing is perfect: at the exact second that the last piece of dirty laundry flies into the laundry basket, his parents open the front door.

Pause the story and discuss with the students:

- Do you remember what the message the mother sent said?
- Mirtsu thought Sampo lost control over his online gaming. What did Mirtsu mean by this?
- What does it mean to be addicted?
- Is Sampo addicted? How can you tell?
- Do you think Sampo has any rules regarding how much time he can spend playing these games?
- Why is it better to do your homework and chores before playing video games?
- How can playing games interfere with Sampo's learning?

You can also ask these questions:

- Does someone Sampo's age need a cell phone?
- What properties should it have?
- What things regarding using a cell phone are good to learn?
- How should you answer a cell phone?

Third Clip: HONESTY IS ALWAYS THE BEST POLICY

Sampo decides to be honest and tell his parents about the true state of his homework. He confesses bravely that this day’s homework is not done, and that this is not even the first time he has not finished his homework because of online games.

Mum and Dad do not get angry, however, though they do say that they are a little disappointed in Sampo—he is far too clever boy to bring harm to his schoolwork because of gaming. Internet games are by no means harmful as such, and it is ok to keep playing them – but only now and then. Dad reminds that school, real friends and playing outdoors is much more important. Sampo understands that, but he admits that he is worried that others will laugh at him if he does not do well in the other boys’ games. Sampo tells his parents that he is feeling like an outsider at school.
Mum tells Sampo that she might know a solution for this problem and gives him a hug. She promises to reveal her plan the next day, as long as Sampo finishes his homework first. Dad even ruffles Sampo’s hair and tells him that at Sampo’s age, he too had not yet found a hobby that he enjoyed. After trying out many sports, he found that he liked tennis – and still does.

Pause the story and discuss with the students:

- Why did Sampo tell his parents about his video gaming?
- What other issues (regarding Internet use) should you talk to your parents about?
- What makes playing games fun?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- What kind of new hobbies could Sampo try, that would combine playing games and exercise?
- How could Sampo make friends at school?
- What do you think Sampo’s mother has come up with?

_Last Clip: PLAYING OUTDOORS BEATS PLAYING ONLINE_

The next day, Sampo scurries home quicker than usual and does his homework first thing, just as he and Mum agreed the evening before. Then he looks into the fridge for the sandwiches that Mum has made – but what is this? Surprisingly, there are sandwiches for two in the fridge as well as a note from Mum on top of them!

‘Hey Sampo! I heard yesterday that a new family is moving into the house next door today, and they have a son, Matti, who will be joining your class. Matti is coming for a visit at 2 pm. Why don’t you enjoy a snack together, and afterwards you could show him around. Love, Mum’.

- That boy next door must feel just as much like an outsider in the new neighbourhood, and he doesn’t have any more friends than Sampo. Sampo’s Mum came up with such a great idea!

Sampo is happy to learn that he will not have to spend the afternoon home by himself. After Sampo and Matti finish their sandwiches, they decide to try out Sampo’s new frisbee. Who knows, maybe this turns out to be the sport that Sampo is especially good at? They could even suggest playing frisbee in PE classes. From now on, Sampo will do his homework straight after school so that he can hurry out with his new friend – who else would be a better guide to the best playgrounds and hideouts than Sampo!

Discuss with the students:

- What will Sampo be doing after school today?
• How does the story continue?

You can also ask these questions:

• How do you think Matti feels having moved to a new place?
• How does the rest of the class make Matti feel welcomed?
• What kind of games could the two boys play outside?
• What kind of advice can Sampo give his new friend, if he becomes interested in playing games online?
• Do you prefer to play games alone, with a friend, or with an adult?

3) ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT

• If you would create a game yourself, what would it be like?

Designing your own game is best done in smaller groups. Designing the game can be a part of other lessons. Art, English, history, math, religion and, of course, gym class all offer a lot of background information that can be utilized when designing a game. It can be a game, a parlour game, a team game, a board game, a card game, or even a computer game. Media Education Centre Metka organizes video game workshops where you can create your own digital game.

The designed game should have rules that are written down. You should also be able to play the game on the same team with one or several friends (2-16 people). Games that only have one winner, like a race, will not do. Particularly good games are games that can be won in different ways. It's desirable that a player has a chance to win using his/her own strengths.

Background information about the themes of the lesson

The good and bad aspects of playing online/video games

The media often brings up the violence in video games. Studies¹ have shown that there is a link between playing violent games and aggressive behaviour, but it has not been shown that playing these games cause aggressive behaviour. This does not mean that playing violent games can't increase aggressive behaviour to some degree. However, compared with other factors (problems at home, mental and behavioural problems), playing games is not a significant factor.

The positive effects of playing video games are often overlooked. It can be a social activity that helps develop new skills, such as foreign languages. Games and simulations are used for training surgeons, soldiers, pilots, and many other professions, and playing games can be a

¹ http://www.statensmedierad.se/upload/_pdf/Summery_Violent_Computer_Games.pdf
stepping-stone to a job or studies in information technology. Also, the game industry is constantly creating new innovations. Technology development is in fact heading towards becoming more game oriented and playful.

Wikipedia article: Learning through play
Wikipedia article: Serious game

Game addiction

The term “game addiction” is problematic, especially when talking about children and youths. Children have a lot of spare time, that they like to spend doing things they enjoy. Children have few obligations or other tasks, so they can spend several hours a day playing video/computer games. Children can be big media consumers, but it usually wears off by the time they reach puberty or get other hobbies.

Playing digital games does not alone cause addiction. It doesn't serve any purpose to start treating a child's “addiction”. Instead you should set boundaries and make sure that routines, such as domestic chores and homework, get done. As the child grows, the parents usually allow more time for playing digital games. At this point it can become an addiction if the child has no other interests, or if there are personal issues in life the child doesn't want to confront. Being absorbed by video games can therefore be a symptom of other problems.

Signs of excessive gaming:

- A lot of time is spent playing games, and the child forgets to take breaks
- Not playing causes restlessness and irritation
- Real-world friends are forgotten
- Other obligations are left undone
- The circadian rhythm is altered
- Gaming causes absence from school
- Other hobbies are neglected

About age ratings

Age ratings for board and card games are recommendations that tell you how complicated the rules are. A board game with an age rating of 15 tends to be complicated, and it is required that you assimilate the rules of the game. However, a board game is seldom harmful to children. For digital computer and video games, the age ratings do not reflect the difficulty, but the harmfulness of the game. The different age ratings are 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18 years.

Games with the age rating 3 are suitable for all ages, games and movies with the age rating 7 are suitable for children in elementary school, games and movies with the age rating 12 are suitable for children in secondary school, and games and movies with the age rating 16 are suitable for
those who have graduated secondary school. Games with the age rating 18 often include difficult themes, serious violence and sex. Only adults should play these games. Digital computer and video games most often contain interactive stories that require the player to act in a certain way in order for the story to proceed. The higher the age rating, the more violent and dubious the actions demanded from the player. The content describing icons, found on the game cover together with the age rating, indicate the type of choices the player will have to make.

2nd Story: Can I Join?
This story is aimed at students in the third and fourth grade

Video in YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKjdZUEwFvg

After the lesson

- The students understand the meaning of using money online
- The students understand the significance of a password
- The students will have the courage to make independent decisions without influence from friends
- The students learn to identify cyber bullying

The structure of the lesson
1. Start the lesson with a warm-up assignment (about five minutes)
2. Video (video length: 06:12, reserve at least 25 minutes for discussions)
3. Final exercise (about ten minutes)

The progression of the lesson

1) START OF LESSON

It's good to start the lesson with an exercise that sets up the theme. The warm-up assignment lightens the atmosphere and sets up the discussions. In a safe and relaxed environment, the students have the courage to present their own thoughts regarding the video.

If your computer could talk, what would it tell us about your past week?

Ask the students to write it on the blackboard, on a piece of paper, tell a partner, or to just think about what the computer at home would tell about the student's Internet use. You can also give them helpful questions:

- How much time have you spent online?
- What kind of fun or sad things have you encountered on the Internet?
- What things have you searched for information about?
- How has the Internet been helpful, for example when doing assignments for school?
- What kind of rules regarding Internet use or playing computer games does your family have?

2) THE VIDEO

First Clip: ANNI WANTS A FASHION MODEL -ACCOUNT

At school, Anni has become friends with Henna, who is a year older. Anni is excited to be playing with friends that are older than she is. Henna knows a lot about different things, and she also has her very own laptop. Anni’s Mum thinks that Anni is still too young to have a laptop of her own, because using a computer and the internet should first be practised together with parents. Anni is upset about this, because she would like to show Henna that she too knows how to use the internet.

Henna tells Anni that all the other girls at school have an account on the Fashion Model–site, where they can dress up their models, select beautiful clothes for them and decorate gorgeous rooms. According to Henna, they cannot remain friends if Anni does not have her own Fashion Model–account. Besides, the most popular girls have premium accounts that let them choose from even bigger selections of beautiful jewellery and clothes - but it costs real money. Anni feels bad because she has neither a laptop nor a Fashion Model–account and not even money. 'Why can’t I be like the others,” she worries.
Pause the story and discuss with the students:

- What kind of things should Anni learn together with an adult before she can use the Internet by herself?
- Why does Henna want to create an online paper doll account for Anni?
- What does an account subject to a charge mean? How can you tell if you have to pay for using the website?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- What kind of websites would you recommend to Anni, and why?
- How many of you have an own character on an Internet site, for example in a game? What kind of websites are they?

Second Clip: HENNA HELPS ANNI OUT

Henna, who is a year older, says that she is a good friend because she can help Anni open her own Fashion Model account online. Anni’s Mum would not give her permission to do this, because she has said that using the internet should be practised first at home, together with parents. But Henna makes Anni believe that all the popular girls have the more extensive premium Fashion Model account, which costs money. If she can only borrow Anni’s mobile for a moment, soon Anni will also have that account. Anni is not quite sure what to do.

- Hi! I’m the Net Reindeer Mirtu! I would ask Anni to think carefully whether it’s a good idea to lend her own mobile to a friend, especially when it’s going to be used for something that she doesn’t have her parents’ permission for!

Anni hesitates a little, but Henna manages to talk Anni into the scheme. Surely Anni wishes to join the group?

Anni gives her mobile to Henna, who opens an account on the Fashion Model site for Anni. Henna asks what password Anni would like to have – the password should be something that she’ll be sure to remember. Something really easy, like the name of her little brother or her pet.

Pause the video and discuss with the students:

- What went wrong in the story?
- What would have happened if Anni had refused?
- How did Anni feel when Henna created a paper doll account on her behalf?
- Would you have borrowed Henna your cell phone? Why?
• What is a good password like?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

• Should you tell a friend what your password is? What can happen if you share a character in a game with a friend?
• Where should you keep your passwords? Why do passwords exist?
• How would you describe a good friend?
• Do you have to have the same hobbies as a friend?
• Can you disagree with a friend?
• How can you say no to a friend?

Third Clip: ANNI RECEIVES COMMENTS

With Henna’s help, Anni now has her own Fashion Model—account. Anni herself doesn’t have experience of using the internet, because Mum thinks they should practise it together. But Henna has promised that Anni could join the older girls’ group, if she used the Fashion Model—site, too.

First, Henna shows Anni how to buy clothes with game dollars and dress up the models. Anni doesn’t understand that the game dollars have been bought with real money – after all, it was Henna who opened the account for her, using Anni’s mobile, and Anni herself did not read the terms and conditions of the site. But Anni doesn’t worry too much; instead she happily begins to change the outfits of her Fashion Model—character: print leggings, micro shorts, flared skirts, shoes with bows on them and jewellery with feathers...

Little by little, Anni begins to receive comments on her model’s outfits – but not all of them are very nice. Some users Anni does not know begin to ridicule the way Anni dresses her model – they say that Anni dresses her model in ugly clothes, just as ugly as Anni’s own school outfits.

Pause the video and discuss with the students:

• How is the pretend money bought? What other things can you order or purchase with your cell phone?
• Why is Anni’s character being teased?
• How does Anni feel when she and her character are getting bashed?
• Who is bashing Anni’s character?
• Who could help her, and what could Anni do herself?
If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- What is the difference between virtual goods and real goods? What happens to the virtual goods when you stop playing the game?
- What happens if you inform the administrator about the bullying?

Last Clip: ANNI COUNTS ON MUM’S HELP

Anni has opened an account on the Fashion Model –site, and she is starting to get irritated because she does not know who is making fun of her online. The really nasty comments are hurting Anni’s feelings. The worst is that they seem to know Anni from school, too. Soon Anni notices that someone else is using her own Fashion Model –account – Someone has bought more clothes for Anni’s character without her knowledge. That means that someone knows Anni’s password!

- Now is not the time to panic! The only ones who really have problems here are the cowardly people who sneer at others online, hiding behind their usernames. It is good to be brave and tell your parents, so that you can together report the taunting to the webmasters of the site – they know how to put a stop to it!

As can be expected, Mum is not happy about Anni using the internet on her own against their agreement, and even buying model dollars with her mobile. But, instead of getting angry, Mum promises to help Anni. And when Anni lets Mum know that it was actually Henna who used the mobile, Mum asks immediately if Anni also chose her password while Henna was listening – that is how Anni’s password got into the wrong hands.

Anni is very sorry, but Mum comforts her and says that if Anni now promises to practise using the internet first with her parents, next year she may already get her very own laptop. ‘But remember, Anni”, Mum chides – ”Never give your password to any outsiders, and if you have a question about the internet you should not hesitate to ask your parents first.”

- Anni’s Mum speaks wisely! Keep in mind that passwords are just like underpants; don’t leave them lying around, don’t lend them to friends, and change them often enough!

Discuss with the students:

- What advise did the mother give?
- How could Anni tell that someone had been using her account?
- Who has used her account on the web page?
- What kind of trouble could Anni get into, if someone else uses her account?
- What did Anni learn from all of this?
3) FINISHING THE LESSON

An exercise in pairs will be a good ending to the lesson:

Ask the students to form pairs and to interview each other one after another:

1. Has your view on friendship changed over the years? What qualities of a friend did you appreciate two years ago/today?
2. Think about a moment when you experienced something really nice together with a friend. What happened?
3. Has a friend ever pressured you to do something? How should you react to pressure? Can you say no to a friend sometimes?
4. What kind of friendships do you hope to have in secondary school or as an adult?

Background information about the themes of the lesson

Using money on the Internet

Virtual spending on different Internet services is a way to learn how to manage your own money. The child does not necessarily understand the value of money, and is unable to proportion virtual money to real money. It is worth thinking about how you want to spend your allowance: spend it on virtual goods, or save for a new bike. These skills can also be taught at school.

Many Internet and game pages marketed as free of charge are media products intended for sale, just like movies, books or TV-shows. Youths primarily use three types of pages that involve money transactions:

1. Monthly fees for online games, music services and Internet communities (e.g. World of Warcraft, Spotify).
2. Purchases related to games and Internet services (e.g. clothes or an item for a character).
3. Games and applications for cell phones, as well as computer games from different application stores (e.g. Steam, AppStore).

Moreover, commercialism is present on pages where money does not move between producer and user, but are funded by advertising (e.g. Facebook and Google). Children and youths spend a large chunk of their Internet time on pages that have a commercial motive.
It's noteworthy that online games can more and more be played with a cell phone, in which case expenses appear on your phone bill. Even though you might get a free game character at first, advancing in the game usually requires use of real money. Real money is normally converted into virtual money. This is done with a credit- or bankcard, or by adding a fee to your phone bill. Commodities can also be purchased by bank transfer, e.g. through the International payment system PayPal. For payment, the character can develop itself and its skills. For example in the paper doll games like GoSupermodel, popular among girls, you can buy clothes and accessories for your character. A similar example for boys is the game Runescape, in which you can buy better horses or weapons for real money.

In a group of children, money can also be a tool for strengthening your identity and status. For example someone who does not have an account subject to charge may face name-calling. It's important to think about, together with children and youths, why money is used and what kind of feelings the use of virtual money resonates.

Virtual characters are also traded online. For example characters developed for online role games can cost hundreds of Euros on online auctions. In the Toinen elämä-project (2008) it was discovered that one fifth of 10 to 18 year olds living in the metropolitan area of Helsinki spend real money on virtual commodities, such as internal money of Internet communities. On average, a child spends about 1,7 € a month. Elementary pupils spend more money on virtual commodities than secondary pupils.

You can also sometimes make money by, for example, marketing a game to friends. However, you should always be critical of such opportunities. Check whether you at the same time approve of something else, such as allowing third parties access to your personal information, or allowing marketing of the game on your own Facebook page.

There are aspects of commerce involving minors that should be brought up in class. One common problem is virtual theft. Typically, someone finds out another person's user name and password, and uses them to steal virtual property. Regarding virtual theft, the weakest link is the user: each and every one should make sure the computer is protected, avoid scam websites, and use strong passwords.

For many adults, crimes related to virtual worlds are a relatively unfamiliar matter, and can be regarded as amusing - who would want to nick a pixel man? However for a young person, virtual property can feel just as real as actual items. If virtual property is lost, the young person reacts accordingly. The trade of virtual items is worth billions of Euros globally, so it's no small matter.

Remind the students that by signing in to an online service, you agree to the terms and rules of the website. The terms and rules are often good for the user, but may sometimes include a clause that, for example, allows all material to be used for their own marketing. Therefore it's worth reading the terms.
The significance of a password

A good and well-kept password can save you from a lot of trouble. Giving your password to a friend is never a measure of friendship. A good password consists of symbols, numbers and letters. The password should be impossible to guess. Therefore, a good password is not the name of a pet or brother. For example, you can create a password using mnemonics. The password Mbwbi2009 is created from the sentence "My brother was born in 2009". Easy to remember, but difficult to guess!

If a password falls into the wrong hands, the result can be having your e-mail or game account changed or deleted, misuse of your account (e.g. taunting messages sent to a friend in your name), or having your private information spread on the Internet.

Online bullying

Online and cell phone bullying is most common among younger Internet users, but also appears among students in secondary school and high school. However, online bullying is relatively rare: according to the study EU Kids Online, 5% of Finnish children reported that they had experienced online bullying. A Europe-wide study concluded, that 93% of children neither bully nor get bullied.

EU Kids Online revealed that those who bully have themselves been bullied before and are in a socially weak position. Also the bullied children seem to come from atypical backgrounds compared with the so-called regular pupils. Bullying online and in school are often tightly associated with each other – but not always. The fact that the child bullied on the Internet can't even escape the bullies at home is a big challenge.

There are many different types of Internet bullying. In social media, these are typical ways of bullying:

- Stealing passwords in order to cause harm, for example by logging on and bashing people in the other person's name
- Spreading embarrassing or nasty pictures and videos
- Starting groups with the intention to bully, bash or threaten someone, for example a public figure or a bullied person
- Anonymous trash-talk on discussion forums
- Excluding someone from a group, e.g. a classmate is not allowed to join a group reserved for the students of the class
- Sending scary videos to a friend
It's hard to estimate the feelings of others online, and therefore just a small prank intended as a joke, can make someone really sad and bother that person for a long time. Someone sending nasty pictures or scary videos can therefore not know how the receiver will react to the content.

The consequences of online bullying may surprise the bully. The actions may be considered criminal, and also minors have to take the consequences. Talk to the students about what can be considered a criminal offence.

An online prank can often reach a broad audience, remain visible online for a long time (e.g. it can be difficult to remove a video), and may cause long-lasting shame. The bully may have no opportunity to retract the prank, once it has been posted on the Internet - even if you delete it from your own computer it can remain online.

**Peer pressure**

When approaching adolescence, friends become more important than parents. School is the centre of the social life of a young person. This is where they come to meet their friends and to observe their crush. Without friends, going to school wouldn't necessarily be that interesting. At school, youths try out different roles and try to find their own place in the group: collisions are inevitable. It's good to remind them that you don't have to be friends with everybody. However, you should be able to get along with everybody.

Social relationships work as a mirror for a young person, and most often as a positive resource. The positive influence of friends is questionable, if a group is pressuring its members to do undesired or illegal activities. For a young person, it's hard to say no to peer pressure. High self-respect helps a young person in difficult situations: when a young person has confidence in him-/herself, disadvantageous things are most often left undone.

A young person compares him-/herself to other youths: what am I compared to others, what do others think of me? Receiving positive feedback from others is important. Negative feedback and bullying can at worst have a negative effect on the person's self-image and can lower the developing self-esteem.

Also, there are differences in the friendships of boys and girls. Boys tend to feel comfortable in groups, whereas girls value a selected few friends or a single best friend. Girls have closer friendships than boys. Therefore it's often more important for girls than boys to own certain things or walk around in certain types of clothes. You can be excluded from the group for reasons that are flimsy in the eyes of an adult.
3rd Story: Am I the Only One?
This story is aimed at students in the fifth through seventh grades

Video in YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOsqBoqBTJg

After the lesson

- The students reflect on their privacy settings on social media sites
- The students are able to evaluate the trustworthiness of people they meet online
- The students can identify different forms of online bullying
- The students understand that laws also apply online

The structure of the lesson

1. Start the lesson with a warm-up assignment (about five minutes)
2. Video (video length: seven minutes, reserve 25 minutes for discussions)
3. Final exercise (about ten minutes)
The progression of the lesson

1) START OF LESSON

It's good to start the lesson with an exercise that sets up the theme. The warm-up assignment lightens the atmosphere and sets up the discussions. In a safe and relaxed environment, the students have the courage to present their own thoughts regarding the video.

Simon says

Ask the students to stand up and make space for themselves. Read out loud the following claims about Internet use. If a student agrees, he/she is to perform the mentioned task.

The claims:

1. If you use the Internet every day, bend your left arm towards the right side of your body.
2. If you have ever used Messenger, raise both hands.
3. If you have uploaded pictures of yourself, stretch both hands towards your toes.
4. If you have gotten to know new people online, make a funny face.
5. If you have witnessed online bullying, touch your nose with your right index finger.
6. If you have regretted posting something online, touch your left ear with your left pinkie.
7. If you know how to change the privacy settings on Facebook, do a quick squat.
8. If you know what an Internet policeman does, do two X jumps.

2) THE VIDEO

First Clip: THE INTERNET AS A MEETING PLACE

Riikka is really looking forward to starting the 7th grade next year. Many kids in Riikka’s class have already kissed someone and are even dating, but Riikka has not had a boyfriend yet. Riikka is not really interested in any of the boys in her class, but she would not want to start secondary school as the only girl who has never dated.

Riikka decides to open an account on FaceSpace, because she has heard that her friends have received many friend requests there from cute boys. Riikka knows one girl in secondary school, who says that she even found a boyfriend there!

Riikka opens an account on FaceSpace. She uploads photos, among others from a class trip they took at the end of the spring. The trip was a great success, and everybody took lots of pictures. Riikka thinks that it is fun to share nice memories with her FaceSpace-friends – the class trip was after all the best trip she had ever been on!
Pause the video and discuss with the students:

- Can you find new friends online? What kind of friends?
- What social networking services do you use or know of? What do you do there?
- What should you remember if you post pictures online?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- Why do some Internet services have age restrictions?
- What can happen if you lie about your age online?
- How does talking to someone online differ from talking face to face?

Second Clip: THINK BEFORE YOU POST

Riiikka has just opened a FaceSpace account, and she tags her friend Iida — who also has a FaceSpace account — on photos of them swimming during the class trip. Soon both Iida’s and Riiikka’s friends start posting comments on the pictures. One of Iida’s friends asks about Riiikka: “Who is that girl who is wearing really embarrassing clothes?” Iida replies: “Just a school friend I had to hang out with”. The friend goes on with the mocking and writes; “I would not be seen dead with someone like her”. Riiikka starts to get embarrassed and ashamed.

- Hi there! I’m the Net Reindeer Mirtsu! I just wanted to say that if there’s someone here who has made a fool of themselves, it’s that person with their rude comments. Luckily, you can adjust the settings on FaceSpace so that you can decide who gets to see your photos and post comments. Oh, and one more thing! Check this out, I have a friend like this!

- Hi, I’m the Net Police Fobba! Did you know that there’s a law against slander, and public name-calling can also be defined as slander. So it pays to be especially careful about what you write on the internet! There is also a function on FaceSpace that you can use to report to hurtful or inappropriate things to the webmasters. Don’t forget that the very first thing you should do is let your parents or teacher know. Trustworthy adults will always help you!

- Good-looking and clever, or what?
Pause the video and discuss with the students:

- What do you think about the comments sent by Lida and her friends?
- How does Riikka feel about them?
- Can commenting be regarded as bullying?
- What does the word defamation mean? What else can be regarded as criminal online?

If you want to, you can also ask:

- What should you take into account when posting something on the Internet?
- What things should you not upload or post online?

**Third Clip: CHECK YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS**

*Riikka is upset because of the mean and inappropriate name-calling, and she decides to change her FaceSpace settings so that only her friends can see her photo album, and she is not going to post photos of other people without their permission any more. She chooses the most flattering photo for her profile picture and logs in to an innocent-looking dating game.*

*Soon Riikka begins to receive friend requests from nice-looking boys, even from abroad! Wouldn’t it be exciting to have a foreign boyfriend! Some of them do look a bit odd, but there are younger ones among them. Riikka friends some of them, as well as a Finnish boy, Niko. Niko seems really nice, and he is only a year older. Niko starts to poke Riikka, and she pokes him back.*

Pause the video and discuss with the students:

- How can you make sure that a person online is whom he/she claims?
- On what grounds should you become friends with someone online?
- What is it like to get to know people over the Internet? How is it different from getting to know someone face to face?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- What happens when you "poke" someone?
- Should you accept strangers as friends based on how they look? Or based on having mutual friends?
Fourth Clip: MEETING WITH AN ONLINE FRIEND

Riikka has opened an account on FaceSpace, and soon she gets a private message from Niko asking if Riikka is single. When Riikka replies that she is, Niko suggests that they meet up. "Wow, nothing could be cooler than a boyfriend in secondary school!" Riikka thinks.

Riikka and Niko agree to meet for a date in the park on Friday night. Riikka lies to her parents that she is going to a friend’s house to watch a film – Mum has told Riikka always to let them know where she goes and with whom, so that her parents can pick her up if necessary. Even though Riikka has been honest with Niko and told him that she is 12, she wants to put on some make-up so that she wouldn’t seem so young in Niko’s eyes. Riikka takes a mascara and a lipstick from her Mum’s make-up case and starts to put on make-up in the staircase.

- Now use your common sense! It is definitely not wise to go and meet a complete stranger alone, when you know nothing about them!

Riikka starts to get a little scared herself, so she sends a text to her best friend who agrees to come with Riikka. First, Riikka makes her friend swear that she will never tell her own parents who she is going with and where.

Pause the video and discuss with the students:

- What are the risks with talking to strangers?
- What things can you talk about with strangers online?
- What should you take into account when meeting an Internet acquaintance? What did Riikka do right?
- Why does she not want to tell her parents who she is meeting and where?

If you want to, you can also ask these questions:

- How do you give a good impression of yourself to new acquaintances online?
- How do you end a conversation with someone who you don't like talking to?
- Why does Riikka want to look older than she really is?

Last clip: TAKING CONTROL OF THE SITUATION

Riikka and her friend are on their way to meet Niko, who is a year older and whom Riikka has met online. When they get to the agreed place, the boy in the photo is nowhere to be seen. Instead, there’s a boy peeking from behind a tree who looks exactly like Riikka’s classmate Antti, and he is taking photos of the girls with his mobile. The girls realize that they have been fooled – there is no 13-year-old
Niko at all. Soon they hear familiar sounds of laughter from the bushes, where Antti and two other classmates are laughing at the girls. Antti threatens to post the photos of Riikka wearing make-up online, so that everybody else can see them as well.

-Well, now this reindeer’s antlers are all mixed up! What should you do in a situation like this?

-We do a lot of work so that situations like these wouldn’t happen. But because there is so much to do, you yourselves have to consider safety issues every time you use the internet. And never forget that because your parents are responsible for and worry about you, it is very important that they know where you really are. I already phoned Riikka’s Mum, who said she would pick the girls up immediately – she even promised to make pancakes, as long as the girls tell what happened first, calmly and in their own words.

Riikka’s best friend comforts her by telling her that she has not had a real boyfriend yet, either, and neither have many others in their class. There is always a lot of talk, but the truth is something completely different. Besides, in secondary school the girls are sure to meet nice and cute boys who neither tease nor trick them.

Discuss with the students:

- The boys threatened to upload the pictures and video. What problems did that cause for the girls? What did the boys do wrong?
- What do the girls need to do if they want to stop the pictures being spread? What adult could help?
- Can you contact the police in this situation? How? What information does the police need?
- What has Riikka learned from all of this?
- How does the story continue?

3) FINISHING THE LESSON

You can continue to discuss the themes of the video through active exercises. For example the exercise “How bad does it feel?” fits the story about Riikka.

“How bad does it feel?”

One end of the classroom is a place where “it feel terrible”, and the other end is a place where you “feel nothing”. In the middle of the classroom it “bothers a little bit”. Ask the students to go stand in one of these places, depending on how they would feel if they would experience the following situations.

Read the following situations out loud, and wait until all the students have found their place before reading the next situation.
1. An Internet acquaintance spread groundless rumours about my best friend.
2. Someone got their hands on my Messenger password, and sent really embarrassing messages to my friends in my name.
3. I noticed that someone had created a group intended for making fun of a student in my class.
4. Untruthful claims about me are being spread online, and now nobody wants to socialize with me during recess.
5. My brother uploaded pictures of me. I think they're ugly, but he refuses to delete them.
6. Someone sent a picture to my cell phone of a classmate with a zebra's body.
7. I heard that an online group had been created for students in our class, but I was not invited to join.
8. I uploaded a nice picture of myself. Someone had posted the comment "fatso".
9. Two of my friends play a fun online game together. I asked if I could join, but they said no.
10. A student in my parallel class told me a secret online about someone in her class.

End by explaining that there were no wrong or right answers in this exercise. Different people respond to something in different ways. Online you can't see the other person's face, and therefore it's hard to know how the other one feels. Something that makes you "feel nothing", can feel terrible for someone else.

**Background information about the themes of the lesson**

**New friends on the Internet**

Primarily, children and youths communicate online with people they know in real life, but sometimes they get to know other people as well. Young people think that it's easy and pleasant to get to know people online. The majority believes that you can take to someone and meet a partner on the Internet.

For many it's more natural to meet people online than in real life, because it's easier to be yourself and to express your own feelings and thoughts. The Internet is also an excellent place for peer support. You can open up to internet friends about things that you feel embarrassed talking about with friends from school. E.g. bullying at school or parents' alcoholism can be such issues. On the Internet you can reach like-minded people, or other fans of a band you like. A young person can end up building meaningful friendships only on the Internet if, for example, attempts to make friends at school have failed or the person for some reason feels rejected. Internet communities can be important channels for children and youths to meet their peers, discuss important matters, and exchange opinions and perspectives.

Since online communication is partially distorted - we can't see the person we're talking to, and we don't know exactly what kind of person it is - there are risks involved with talking to strangers. Very personal matters should not be discussed with a stranger, and you should not reveal details about yourself.
Lying about your age online

One quarter of all Finnish children under the age of 13 have their own Facebook account, even though the service has an age limit of 13. So, all underage Facebook-users have lied about their age during the registration process. If a child claims to be an adult, he/she will also be exposed to ads meant for adults, and the security systems for children on Facebook won't be working. It's good to think about what kind of message you are sending a child, when you accept lying about your age online. Does that mean you can bend all rules?

Privacy and publicity online

Internet services can be troublesome from a privacy perspective. Social media services can appear as private circles, and the user may not necessarily know who can see your own updates. The Internet is a public media; so all published content should be something you could put up on the noticeboard at school.

Many social media services offer the possibility to adjust your privacy settings: what information you want to be public, and what information you only want certain people to see. You should be careful with the settings, because new properties are constantly being developed.

Limiting your circle of friends significantly reduces the number of unwanted contact attempts, and the risk of personal affairs being spread. Friends can be divided into different groups, and the groups can be given certain rights, e.g. to see pictures, videos and updates. Together with the students, discuss the risks of accepting friends of friends as your friends, and showing your own updates to all users.

Everyone's personal details are valuable, such as name, address, phone number, identity number, birthday and -year, school, and the name of your hobby organization. You should always think twice about publishing such information - especially several pieces of information at the same time. Pictures can also be personal information. Remind the students that you should not publish your own or anyone else's personal details, or pictures without the consent of those appearing in the picture.

Social media services are primarily run by commercial companies. They are not intended as place where young people can babble on. The more a user reveals about interests, place of residence and other details, the easier it is for marketers to aim their marketing to certain target groups. Think about what kind of personal information you want to reveal to marketers and the commercial service. For example, liking a company or becoming friends with a celebrity on Facebook, exposes the user to their marketing messages.

The fact that Internet services are so often deeply rooted in everyday life makes it even more difficult to distinguish between privacy and publicity. Users of mobile Internet devices are very familiar with location-based services. Foursquare, Facebook Places, and other location-based applications enable the user to check in at different locations, e.g. a hamburger restaurant, and collect so called "badges". Doing this can get you a discount on a hamburger meal, or something else. At the same time the
information spreads to your friends, which can get them in the mood of eating a hamburger. So, the user is actually marketing the hamburger restaurant. A bully or stalker can also receive information about where the user is spending time.

**Online bullying**

The challenge with online bullying is that some view bullying as not so serious, whereas others can be very offended. It's hard to estimate the feelings of others online, and therefore just a small prank intended as a joke, can make someone really sad and bother that person for a long time. Someone sending nasty pictures or scary videos can therefore not know how the receiver will react to the content. The lack of physical clues may skew the message, and especially irony is, in the absence of pronunciation, easily misinterpreted online. You should therefore be very careful with what you say, especially when talking to strangers.

Already at a young age, it's good to encourage students to intervene with online bullying: you should never join online bullying groups, "like" bullying messages or forward them. You can support the bullied by sending encouraging messages. You can also notify the bully, in public or privately, that his/her actions are not appropriate. Even though the target is not a close friend, it's important that all people witnessing bullying step in. You can also notify a teacher, parents, or the site administrator. A young person bullied online should be advised to use security features, such as blacklists or block lists, that prevent troublemakers and bullies from sending messages or contacting them.

If you don't want a picture or a video to be spread online, the best way is to contact the administrator and have the picture removed. The terms of most social media services state that all people appearing in a picture should give their consent before the picture is posted. If this is not the case, the picture will be removed. If you know who originally posted the picture, you should tell him/her that you don't like such actions. It may be that the bully thought it was a harmless prank, and did not realise it would cause grief.

For children it can be hard to understand and to accept that an adult steps in, and they may fear that the bullying will get worse. Therefore you have to pay attention to the whole group: collective events that strengthen individual participation and group spirit, active exercises, dealing with emotions and strengthening comradeship among students, make the group function better and prevents bullying.

**Laws also apply online**

The Finnish law applies online just as in real life: you cannot bully, threaten, call someone names, publish embarrassing pictures, or in any other way deliberately cause distress. The consequences of online bullying may surprise the bully. The actions may be considered criminal, and also minors have to take the consequences. Examples of such actions are: threatening to kill, defamation, spreading personal information and stealing virtual property.
Defamation

A person who spreads false information or a false insinuation of another person so that the act is conducive to causing damage or suffering to that person, or subjecting that person to contempt, shall be sentenced for defamation to a fine or to imprisonment for at most six months. If the offence is committed by using the mass media or otherwise by making the information or insinuation available to many persons, the offender shall be sentenced for aggravated defamation to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years. Penal code, chapter 24, sections 9 & 10.

Dissemination of information violating personal privacy

A person who unlawfully disseminates information, an insinuation or an image of the private life of another person, so that the act is conducive to causing that person damage or suffering, or subjecting that person to contempt, shall be sentenced for dissemination of information violating personal privacy to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years. Penal code, chapter 24, section 8

You should always save evidence and hand it over to the police. The positive side of online bullying is that it always leaves a trace. You can take a screenshot or photograph of messages or pictures. You can contact the police online, or by visiting the closest police station.

The contact information of the Virtual Community Police Team can be found at www.poliisi.fi/nettipoliisi. You will also find links to the policemen’s profiles on Facebook and IRC-Galleria. Young people can easily contact the police through these channels. Remind the students that it’s up to the police to judge whether or not a crime has been committed. You don’t have to be sure when contacting the police.

Meeting an Internet acquaintance

Many online friendships don’t stay online. You also meet new acquaintances face to face. In the best-case scenario, the friendship is deepened, which brings a lot of joy. However, you need to be careful when meeting for the first time. You can never be sure who is hiding behind the Internet identity. A child should always inform a trustworthy adult that he/she is meeting an Internet friend in real life. Arrange the meeting at a public place, where there are lots of passers-by. The first time, you should bring a friend or parent along. Keep your cell phone within reach.

If it turns out the person is not who you thought, immediately leave the area.
Sexual harassment online

A child's intentional or unintentional exploration and adventurousness with strangers may lead to trouble. At worst, a young person can get caught up in a sexual discussion with an adult. Not all people mean well. You constantly need to use common sense when talking to strangers online. You don't need to be intimidated, but it's good to be critical.

It can sometimes be difficult to know the difference between sexual insinuation, sexual harassment and sexual abuse, especially for children and youths. An adolescent can sometimes find messages containing sexual insinuations exciting and fascinating. However, an adult's sexual act against a child is always a felony, also online. Even a discussion with sexual insinuations together with a child under the age of 16 is regarded as criminal. A possible active involvement from the child's part, or inability to understand the abusive and criminal nature of the relationship, does not make the act less serious.

Sometimes adults pretend to be young and try to bond with a child or adolescent online, with the intention to gain sexual satisfaction at a later stage. The abuser gradually builds trust with the child by diffusing and breaking the child's boundaries. This includes insinuations about sexual intercourse, intimate questions, or sending pictures with sexual content. At the same time you create a conception of a privileged relationship, and that the perpetrator understands and cares about the child. Although it appears as subtle “friendship”, it's however a case of sexual abuse.

If the discussion gives you an unpleasant feeling, tell your discussion partner. If that doesn't help, you can close the discussion window or turn off the computer. People behaving in an unpleasant way should be blacklisted and reported to the administrator. Highlight, that the students have the right to say no to anything that feels even a little bit suspicious or unpleasant. A young person should not feel guilty for being deceived by the swindler, and there is no need to protect the swindler. Inform as many as possible about the swindler, so that others can be careful.

Sexual abuse should always be reported to the police. Save the messages as evidence.
Help with problems online

You usually get the best help from your own parents. A young person should keep the parents up-to-date with what he/she is doing online, and what kind of Internet friends he/she has. If the parents have some clue about what their child is doing online, it's easier for the child to talk to them about concerns related to the Internet. According to the Children's Media Barometer 2011, there are hardly ever any disputes regarding the Internet in homes where the parents know what the kids are doing on the Internet.

A group of youth work professionals are on call on the Internet. E.g. the youth workers of Netari and Ehyt have services on many popular social media sites. You can also find social workers and representatives of the church online.

The phone and Internet services of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare are also available. Adult volunteers are on call 365 days a year. The phone call is free of charge, and won't show up on your phone bill. The number is 116 111, and you can write to them online at www.mll.fi/nuortennetti.

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