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A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education
Grant Agreement No. 2022-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000090043



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Desk Research Country Report: Czechia



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Short Description	This report presents the results of desk research conducted in the Czech Republic within the ASAP project. It explores the complex relationship between pre-adolescents and digital/social media, with particular attention to cyberbullying, online risks and digital wellbeing. In addition to analysing statistical data and national research findings, the report highlights good practice initiatives, legislative frameworks, and strategies aimed at enhancing digital literacy and fostering safer, more responsible media use among young people in the Czech Republic.

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Executive Summary

The ERASMUS+ project titled ASAP – A Systemic Approach to Social Media and Pre-adolescents through Thinking Skills Education has produced the Czech Desk Research Report. This report's primary objective is to offer a succinct and all-encompassing portrayal of the confluence between pre-adolescents, digital media, and the specific context of the Czech Republic. Presented below are the summarized key discoveries, organized into distinct categories:

1) Statistical Data (Digital, 2023; DESI 2022)

- Czechia's total population was 10.49 million in January 2023.
- There were **9.61 million** internet users in Czechia at the start of 2023, when internet penetration stood at **91.6%**.
- Czechia was home to **8.07 million** social media users in January 2023, equating to **76.9%** of the total population.
- A total of **15.08 million** cellular mobile connections were active in Czechia in early 2023, with this figure equivalent to **143.8%** of the total population.

2) National research on social media and preadolescents (Kopecký, 2019)

- The Czech Republic has seen an array of surveys and studies examining the relationship between social media and (pre)adolescents, particularly in areas of safety, risk prevention, and cyberbullying.
- These investigations have generated valuable insights into how (pre)adolescents interact with social media, focusing on online safety, risk prevention, and cyberbullying, highlighting challenges and opportunities in the digital landscape.
- Young Czechs aged 11 to 15 comprise 8% of social network "problem users," higher than previous data. Girls show a more problematic behaviour with social networks, while boys excel in computer gaming.
- Czech children are divided into four categories of social media use intensity: non-users (22%), normal users (52%), intensive users (18%), and problematic users (8%).
 - Don't use social networks (22%) - they experience reduced support from their peers, are less physically active, but they also do not tend to use addictive substances and are successful in the school environment.
 - Use social networks daily, but in a reasonable amount (52%) - they have the best ratings of overall life satisfaction, they do not particularly excel in any of the other monitored indicators, but at the same time, they do not show poor results or risks either.
 - Intensive (at every spare moment) use of social networks (18%) - they have the best relationships with peers and are also the most physically active, on the other hand, they have a greater tendency to use addictive substances (compared to "normals" and non-users), increased risk of cyberbullying and bullying.
 - Problematic use (8%) - the most problematic group characterized not only by an extremely high amount of time spent in front of screens but also by low life satisfaction, the risk of depression, bullying, and cyberbullying, disharmonious

relationships in the family and among peers. This group also has the highest inclination to use addictive substances.

- A significant proportion (8%) of Czech schoolchildren exhibit a problematic social media use (PSMU), which encompasses a range of behaviors and outcomes that can negatively affect the well-being of young users, such as excessive time spent online, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, social isolation etc., with gender differences becoming more pronounced as age increases.
- Around 22.5% of children aged 11 to 15 prefer discussing personal matters online over face-to-face interaction, increasing with age.
- About 16% of children between 11 and 15 have daily contact with friends they met online, with intensive and problematic users more likely to have such contact.
- Over half (55%) of parents are unaware of their children's online activities, especially in the case of problematic users.
- The 'Czech Children in the Cyberworld' report reveals alarming trends: many children ignore age limits on social media, YouTube is increasingly popular, and TikTok's usage is surging among the youth.
- Prevention methodologists (see further in chapter 4) play a crucial role in Czech schools, addressing digital safety issues like cyberbullying, sexting, and risky online behavior, and working to create a safe learning environment.
- Methodologists highlight increasing concerns about cyber security issues such as online addiction and cyberbullying, and their role in primary prevention efforts.
- Completion of specialized training for prevention methodologists is hindered by time constraints and inadequate compensation, with only 50 % having completed the necessary training.
- Methodologists spend an average of 80 to 100 minutes per week on their duties, focusing on primary prevention for pupils and administrative tasks.
- Research on children's homes indicates that children from these environments are more vulnerable to risky online situations compared to the general child population, often creating and sharing intimate material online.
- The results from children's homes research compared with the Czech Children in the Cyberworld study suggest that children from children's homes encounter more risky situations online.

3) Good practice examples

Effective approaches for addressing social media in schools and other contexts have been identified, serving as inspiration for the ASAP project:

- **JSNS Educational Programme** (in Czech: JSNS – Jeden svět na školách / in English: OWIS – One World in Schools). The JSNS initiative by People in Need, a Czech humanitarian organization, fosters critical thinking and encourages active civic engagement among students via multimedia teaching sessions. Since 2001, it has covered topics like human rights, media education, and environmental issues, using documentaries and online materials. Films are freely accessible on their website, offering students resources in Czech and English language.
- **"DigiStories: Nela"** is a video game that simulates social networking to facilitate classroom discussions on cyberbullying. Through its realistic portrayal, it enables students to grasp the nature and impacts of cyberbullying. Players navigate a fictional platform, resembling

Instagram or YouTube, where characters like Nela and Anežka experience cyberbullying. Post-game discussions in class, suitable for ages 11-15, delve into behavioral shifts on social media and intergenerational communication differences. This educational tool was co-created by the JSNS program and Charles Games, noted for educational innovation.

- **Caught in the Net** (Documentary). The documentary explores online child sexual abuse, using adult actresses to demonstrate predators' tactics on fake social media accounts. "In the Net: Behind the School" is a version for viewers aged 12+, providing guidance and prevention measures for children. An associated website, <https://vsitifilm.cz/>, offers guidance for parents, teachers, children, and potential predators to prevent further abuse.
- **Bullying Minimization Program**. This program addresses bullying in elementary schools through workshops and consultations. Teachers learn to create a safe classroom climate, recognize bullying stages, handle conversations with involved parties, and cooperate with relevant organizations. Consultations help schools implement anti-bullying strategies, fostering teamwork among teachers and enhancing crisis response. Developed strategies enable effective bullying prevention and management within schools.

4) Legislation and regulation

In the Czech Republic, there is currently no dedicated legislation that provides protection to users specifically against abusive behavior on the Internet.

School Prevention Methodologist:

- According to Decree No. 72/2005 Coll., schools in the Czech Republic must establish a school prevention methodologist position.
- Prevention methodologists work alongside educational counselors, psychologists, and educators in counseling and prevention services for students.
- They create inclusive environments for students with behavioral disorders, ensuring smooth integration into the school community.
- Prevention methodologists focus on preventing socially pathological phenomena, including bullying, substance abuse, truancy, and risky behaviors.
- They collaborate with teachers, assess warning signs, provide counseling, and contribute to the school's Minimum Prevention Program.

Methodological Recommendation on Primary Prevention of Risky Behavior:

- The School Prevention Program (SPP) is essential in addressing and managing risky behaviors within Czech schools.
- The SPP provides guidelines and procedures for handling risky behaviors effectively.
- The process involves steps such as identification, reporting, assessment, intervention, and monitoring/follow-up.
- Collaboration among teachers, prevention methodologists, school psychologists, parents, and experts is emphasized.

System for Recording Prevention Activities (SEPA):

- The SEPA system is an online platform in the Czech Republic used to record prevention activities in schools.

- It centralizes prevention efforts documentation, ensuring a systematic approach to addressing social issues and risks.
- SEPA supports the implementation of the Minimum Prevention Program to create a safe school environment.
- It helps schools document prevention activities, monitor progress, and cooperate with regional prevention methodologists.
- SEPA collects information on school-based primary prevention for data-driven development of effective strategies at various levels.

Introduction

This report, developed within the scope of the ERASMUS+ project ASAP – A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education, aims to provide a concise and comprehensive overview of the intersection between pre-adolescents, digital media, and the Czech context. It collects and examines data from studies and initiatives conducted over the last years seeking to analyse the evolving role of digital media in the lives of pre-adolescents. This report provides the context analysis of available data, research, good practices and strategies for dealing with social media uses and misuses in the school context, educational programmes/activities to prevent and combat cyberbullying and enhance digital/social media literacy among pre-adolescents in the Czech Republic.

By examining existing data, this report aims to equip readers with a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding pre-adolescents' interactions with digital media in the Czech context. It also aims to provide valuable insights to contribute to the ongoing discussion on pre-adolescents, digital media and online safety, presenting a basis for informed decision-making and critical reflection.

The report provides structured and relevant information on the following topics: 1) statistical data, 2) national research on social media and (pre)adolescents, 3) good practice examples, 4) legislation and regulation, 5) other relevant resources and references, and 6) conclusions.

1. Statistical data

According to the report by Kopecký (2018), we can summarize the key statistical data regarding social media use among pre-adolescents in the Czech Republic as follows:

Social Media Use: Many children between the ages of 7 and 12 (51.75%) access social networking sites despite age restrictions. YouTube is the most popular platform, followed by Facebook, Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. TikTok's usage is rapidly increasing, attracting young children aged 10-12, with usage declining after age 13. Around 13% of Czech children use the social network/service Tellonym, often associated with cyberbullying incidents on Instagram.

Mobile Phone Usage: More than half of the surveyed children (59%) have constant internet access on their mobile phones. They primarily use their phones for calls, messages, watching YouTube videos, taking photos, playing games, and listening to music.

Impact of Mobile Phone Use at School: During break times, a majority of children (53%) are allowed to use their mobile phones, engaging in activities like playing games and using social networking sites. Boredom is a common experience whether mobile phone use is permitted or not. Non-mobile activities, such as reading magazines, increase significantly when mobile phone use is prohibited.

Privacy Concerns: A significant percentage of children (35.71%) reported classmates taking pictures of them without permission, while 22.5% experienced classmates taking pictures using mobile phones without consent.

Video Content Consumption: Children actively watch various types of videos, including funny videos, challenges, and let's play videos. A small percentage also watches harmful content, such as videos depicting eating disorders, violence, self-harm, and shocking content. On a positive note, a substantial number of children (22%) watch educational video content.

Cyber Aggression and Risky Behaviors: Verbal aggression is the most common form of cyber aggression, followed by account hacking and the misuse of humiliating photos. Online fraud victimized 13% of children who ordered goods but never received them. "Sharenting" behavior (Kopecký, 2022), where parents share photos or videos of their children online without consent, was reported by 7.8% of children. Additionally, a portion of children received offers from internet users to meet in person, with nearly 70% actually attending the meetings.

2. National research on social media and preadolescents

In recent years, the Czech Republic has witnessed a series of compelling surveys and research studies that have delved into the realm of social media and (pre)adolescents. These investigations have yielded fascinating findings, particularly when examined in conjunction with the domains of safety, risk prevention, and cyberbullying. The wealth of information uncovered in these studies serves as a valuable resource for advancing future projects in this field.

These surveys and research endeavors have provided valuable insights into the intricate relationship between (pre)adolescents and social media platforms. By exploring topics such as online safety, risk prevention, and cyberbullying, these studies have shed light on the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital landscape.

The findings from these investigations are particularly significant, as they offer a deeper understanding of how (pre)adolescents navigate the online world and interact with social media platforms. They provide valuable data on the prevalence and impact of cyberbullying, the potential risks associated with social media usage, and the measures that can be taken to promote online safety.

2.1. “Young Czechs and Social Networks” report

The “Young Czechs and Social Networks” report by Kalman (2022) claims that young people aged 11 to 15 years old account for 8% of so-called problem users of social networks. This is three percentage points higher than the number of users in the Czech Republic revealed in the last national data collection in 2018 by the international HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children) study. Girls are more likely to report problems with social networks than boys. For boys, however, the study confirmed another area in which they dominate: playing computer games.

The research divides Czech children into four groups: from those who are not online at all, or only sporadically, through normal and intensive users to those who, according to the study, show signs of problematic behaviour.

It defines four categories of social networking use in terms of intensity

- Does not use social networks 22.0%
- Uses social networks to a normal (usual) extent 52%
- Uses social networks intensively 18%
- Use of networks indicates problematic use 8%

Main findings

The study shows that 8% of Czech schoolchildren are not in control of their use of social networks: Nearly one in ten young Czechs aged 11-15 show signs of problematic social networking use. In other words: almost one in ten Czech schoolchildren are not in full control of their online lives

A key change in social networking use takes place between the ages of 11 and 13. Both the curve describing the intensity of Czech schoolchildren's online life and the number of users labelled as 'problem' are rising sharply. For boys, this indicator increases by about a third (from 6.3% to 8.5%), for

girls the increase is more than double (from 5.2% to 12.0%). The gender gap then continues to widen with age, with girls statistically at higher risk of problematic social networking than boys.

The number of heavy users doubles for boys and triples for girls between the ages of 11 and 15 (Figure 1).

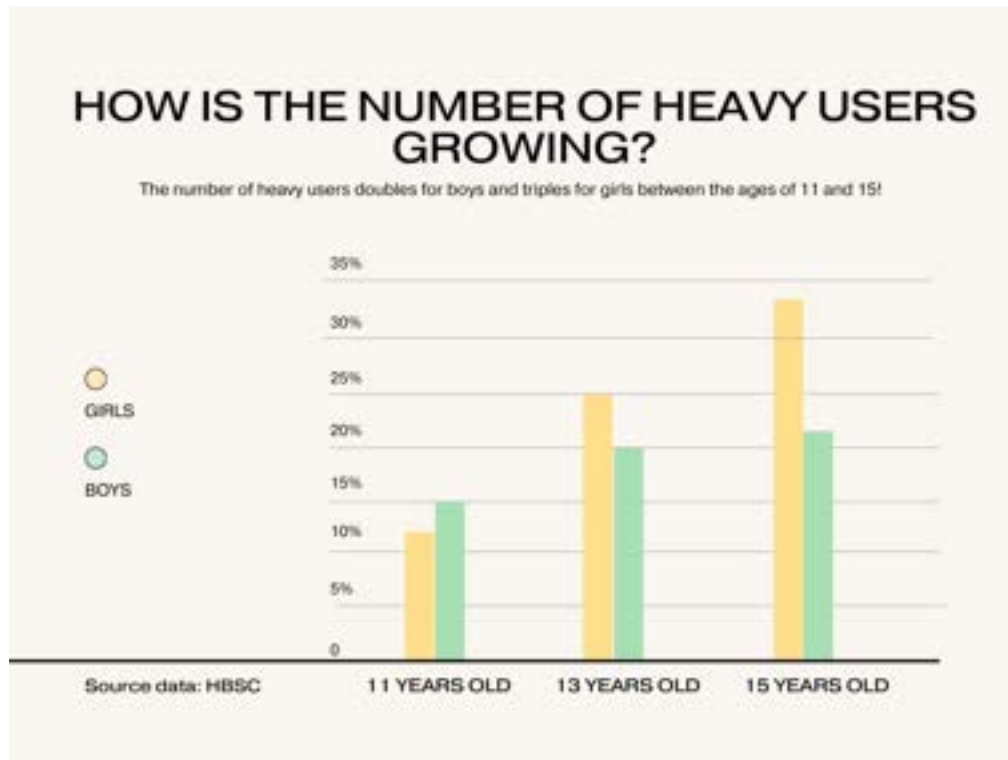


Figure 1: How is the number of heavy users growing?

A fifth of children prefer to talk about 'their stuff' online. 22.5% of schoolchildren aged 11 to 15 prefer to share intimate matters such as their inner feelings, secrets or fears online rather than face-to-face. This tendency is even more pronounced with increasing age, although not dramatically so. For 15-year-olds, it affects 27% of the population, regardless of gender.

While boys and girls who are normal or heavy users account for 20-30% of the group that prefers to communicate online in personal matters, the figure for problem users is already a significant 44%. Thus, as the intensity of social network use increases, the preference for communicating personal information online also increases.

16% of children aged between 11 and 15 are in daily contact with friends they first met online. For 11-year-olds, this is the case for one in ten, and for 15-year-olds, one in five schoolchildren. Intensive users (34.7 %) and problem users (38.8 %) are the most likely - quite logically - to be in online contact with 'virtual' friends.

Children report that more than half of their parents (specifically 55%) do not know what they are doing on social networks. In the case of problem users, this even goes up to two thirds of parents who have no idea about their offspring's online life. However, they are very good at keeping an eye on who their children go out with and what they do there. Just over 80% have a clear idea of how their children spend their free time 'physically'.

2.2. “Czech Children in the Cyberworld” report

The most recent data on social media and preadolescent children that is relevant to the ASAP project is available in a study report “Czech Children in the Cyberworld” that was carried out by Kopecký & Szotkowski (2019) at the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc and O2 Czech Republic. The main conclusions of this report are rather disturbing.

Children are highly active in the online world, utilizing a variety of online services, communication tools, instant messengers, and social networks. However, it is concerning that they often disregard the rules governing their use. For instance, a significant percentage of children between the ages of 7 and 12 (51.75%) access social networking sites, despite not being taught to do so and the age restrictions permitting usage only from 13 years onwards. On a positive note, around one-third of children actively engage with educational resources, particularly online encyclopedias like Wikipedia and general Google searches, to acquire specific information.

Regarding specific online tools, social networks, and messengers, YouTube reigns supreme among children, followed by Facebook (which is losing popularity), Facebook Messenger, and Instagram. Notably, the usage of the social network/service TikTok by children is growing rapidly, with over a quarter of Czech children (28.48%) presently utilizing it. Interestingly, TikTok attracts very young children, often in the 10-12 age range, and the number of active users decreases after the age of 13. Additionally, the number of children using the social network/service Tellonym is also on the rise, with approximately 13% of Czech children currently using it. Tellonym is frequently associated with cyberbullying incidents on Instagram.

Another aspect of the research focused on children and their mobile phones. More than half of the surveyed children (59%) confirmed having constant internet access on their mobile phones, eliminating the need for Wi-Fi, such as in school or at the library. Children primarily use their mobile phones for making calls, sending messages, watching YouTube videos, taking photos, playing games, and listening to music.

The study also examined the impact of banning or allowing mobile phone use during break times on children's activities. A significant majority of children (53%) are allowed to use their mobile phones during school breaks but are prohibited from using them in class. When mobile phone use is permitted, the dominant activities include playing games (41% of children), using social networking sites (38.9%), and experiencing boredom at their desks (33.70%). Interestingly, a similar number of children express boredom even when mobile phone use is prohibited during break time (34.75%). For children who are not allowed to use their mobile phones, common activities include walking around the school (38.66%), experiencing boredom at their desks (34.75%), and reading books (14.89%), followed by engaging in sports activities and playing card games.

The ban on mobile phone use during break time significantly influences a wide range of "non-mobile" activities. In schools where mobile phones are prohibited, nearly 60% more children read magazines during break time compared to schools where mobile phone usage is allowed. Increases can also be observed in book reading (+13.54% favoring schools with a ban), playing board games (+65%), playing card games (+43%), and participating in sports activities (+29%). However, it is worth mentioning that despite the ban, some children still disregard the rules and use their mobile phones during break time.

The use of mobile phones at school has been associated with instances of recording and taking pictures of children without their consent. In the research sample, 35.71% of children (9706) confirmed that their classmates had taken pictures of them without permission, while 22.5% of children (6115) confirmed that their classmates had taken pictures of them using mobile phones without their consent.

Another aspect of the research focused on the consumption of video content in the online environment, utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitch for analysis. Children actively engage in watching various types of videos, including funny videos, challenges, let's play videos, and more. In terms of harmful content, a small percentage of children watch such videos, but exceptions exist. For example, videos depicting people with eating disorders are watched by 11.80% of children on YouTube, videos depicting violence by 8.77%, videos depicting self-harm by 8.67%, and videos depicting shocking and repulsive content by 8.62%. On a positive note, a significant number of children (22%) watch educational video content on YouTube.

Monitoring risky online behavior is an integral part of the research, and the results show a slight decrease in all forms of cyber aggression compared to the previous measurement in 2014. Verbal aggression remains dominant, with approximately 27% of Czech children reporting being targeted. This is followed by account hacking (12.64%) and the misuse of humiliating photos of children (12.25%). Additionally, we have expanded our research to include monitoring various potentially or actually risky situations, including online fraud. Thirteen percent of children confirmed that they had ordered goods online, paid for them, but never received the goods, indicating that they were likely victims of fraud.

Interestingly, the survey respondents also confirmed the presence of "sharenting" - a term used to describe parents uploading photos or videos of their children online without their consent (Kopecký, 2022). In the research sample, over 1,900 children (7.8%) reported their parents engaging in such behavior.

Furthermore, regular monitoring includes the area of internet dating, where 26.77% of respondents (7274 children out of 27177) confirmed receiving offers from other internet users to meet in person, despite not knowing the users personally. Of those invited, nearly 70% of children (5081 out of 7274) actually attended the meetings. It should be noted that while the meeting may not primarily involve encounters with internet predators, it still represents risky behavior.

2.3. School prevention methodologists in primary and secondary schools and the topic "Safety in Cyberspace"

In the Czech school system, methodologists of prevention play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students. These professionals are unique to the Czech Republic and may not exist in the same capacity in other countries. Methodologists of prevention are responsible for addressing various issues related to student welfare, including those arising from the use of digital technologies and social media.

Methodologists of prevention are typically appointed within schools and are specifically trained to identify and address risks and challenges faced by students. They work closely with teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals to develop preventive measures and interventions to promote a safe and supportive learning environment.

One of the key areas of focus for methodologists of prevention is cyber security. They are keenly aware of the increasing incidence of risky online behavior among students and work diligently to raise awareness, educate students about digital safety, and implement effective preventive measures. This includes addressing issues such as online addiction, cyberbullying, sexting, and other forms of digital misconduct that can harm students' well-being.

Methodologists of prevention also play a pivotal role in addressing cyberbullying within schools. They are often the first point of contact for students who have experienced cyberbullying incidents, providing support, guidance, and appropriate interventions. Furthermore, they actively engage in primary prevention efforts by delivering lessons and workshops on cyber safety, including addressing the topic of cyberbullying, to students at various grade levels.

Their expertise extends beyond the school setting as well. Methodologists of prevention collaborate with local communities, parents, and other relevant stakeholders to foster a comprehensive approach to digital and social media literacy. They work to create partnerships and initiatives that aim to promote responsible digital citizenship and empower students to make informed decisions when using social media platforms.

The presence of methodologists of prevention in Czech schools highlights the commitment to ensuring the well-being and safety of students in the digital age. Their unique role and expertise make them instrumental in promoting a positive and secure online environment for students, contributing to the overall educational experience and development of young individuals.

The representative survey was conducted in cooperation with STEM/MARK (STEM/MARK is a research agency that has been providing all areas of marketing research for clients from various industries since 1994). The survey (STEM/MARK, 2020) was conducted among eight hundred school prevention methodologists in primary and secondary schools in the Czech Republic. The survey asked who in Czech schools holds the role of school prevention methodologist, how competent they feel to hold this position professionally, how much time they devote to the preparation and coordination of the agenda related to the function of the prevention methodologist outside of their potential other school activities or what conditions they have for this work. Part of the research was more narrowly thematically focused on 'Safety in cyberspace'.

Main findings

According to methodologists, there has been a noticeable increase in cases of risky behavior in the realm of "cyber security". Over the past five years, the prevalence of online addiction among pupils has risen, as reported by 64% of school prevention methodologists (with a fifth of them stating that the increase is significant). Additionally, there has been a rise in the frequency of cyberbullying incidents at school, according to 57% of the respondents.

Cyberbullying emerges as the most frequently mentioned issue that methodologists have addressed within the school environment in the past two years. Approximately 46% of methodologists have dealt with three or more instances of cyberbullying, while 80% have addressed at least one incident. Furthermore, respondents from secondary schools and second level primary schools have focused predominantly on cyberbullying in their primary prevention efforts related to cyber safety, conducting an average of three lessons per year on this topic.

In the past two years, 41% of schools have encountered at least one instance of sexting, indicating the presence of such behavior among students. Moreover, 59% of school prevention methodologists claim to possess knowledge of the JSNS training program, which is further elaborated upon in chapter 2.3 as an exemplary practice.

Overall, the insights from methodologists highlight the increasing concerns surrounding risky behavior in the domain of cyber security. The growing occurrence of online addiction, cyberbullying incidents, and cases of sexting demand attention and proactive measures to address these issues effectively. The awareness and utilization of training programs, such as the JSNS program, can play a crucial role in promoting cyber safety and mitigating the risks associated with these behaviors.

The survey also asked who the school prevention methodologists are, how many of them have completed specialised studies, how time-consuming this role is for them and what topics they usually deal with in school:

School prevention methodologists in Czech schools are most often women over the age of 40 (two-thirds). Men are under-represented (just under a fifth). Methodologists are often recruited from the ranks of classroom teachers (63% of them are also classroom teachers), but one fifth do not hold any other position in the school. In small municipalities, where understaffing of schools can be assumed, it is many times more common for the post of prevention methodologist to be held by the school principal. The average length of experience in this position is 8 years. The overwhelming majority of methodologists are entrusted with this activity by the school management (over 80%), with only a fifth of respondents expressing voluntary interest in this role. Almost without exception, the prevention methodologist is the only person from the school who is involved in the preparation of the minimum prevention programme (he/she is usually assisted by the counselling centre).

Only half of the respondents had completed a minimum of 250 hours of specialisation training to perform the function of school prevention methodologist.

The main reasons for this are mainly the time required for the studies (77% of respondents) and inadequate remuneration (71%). Approximately half of the respondents also cite the fact that they do not plan to remain as a school prevention methodologist for a long time.

Completion of specialisation studies is more common among prevention methodologists working at the second level of primary and secondary schools. Prevention methodologists in secondary vocational schools and apprenticeships more often cite lack of funding and lack of understanding on the part of the school management as reasons for not having yet completed a specialisation course. In contrast, teachers at primary and secondary schools, where lower levels of risky behaviour are to be expected, are more likely to consider the study too time-consuming or unnecessary. However, all agree that studying is not sufficiently rewarded. Ten percent of respondents are currently studying it.

On average, it takes methodologists between 80 minutes per week (primary school level 1 and grammar schools) and 100 minutes per week (primary school level 2, and secondary schools) to perform their duties. They spend most of their time coordinating activities related to primary prevention for pupils, and the least time educating colleagues. However, they devote a considerable amount of time to administrative activities, which they would like to significantly reduce if possible. On average, primary school primary prevention methodologists look after about 100 to 200 pupils.

The highest number of students can be referred to the prevention methodologists in grammar schools (on average 420 students).

2.4. “The Online World in Children's Homes” research

The research “[The Online World in Children's Homes](#)” (Kopecký, 2021-2022) was carried out in cooperation with the Centre for the Prevention of Risky Virtual Communication at Palacký University in Olomouc (E-safety project) and involved 166 workers from children's homes and 197 children from all regions of the country. The main purpose of the survey was to find out what preventive measures orphanages implement, what topics they address with children, how work with the Internet is regulated in orphanages or what risk situations children from orphanages experience.

The data analysis shows that compared to other children's social groups, children from children's homes are more vulnerable in this area. The Safer Internet Centre staff also presented the annual statistics of the STOPonline.cz hotline, which received 3944 reports last year. In compiling them, it was found that there has been a significant increase in the number of cases showing that intimate material published on the Internet is created and published by children themselves, as young as 10 years old. The full results of the research from the children's homes environment, including the final report, are available on the bezpecnenanetu.cz website.

The research team compared the results of the Online World in Children's Homes research with the results of the Czech Children in the Cyberworld research (2019), which mapped risky behaviour in children across the entire population - regardless of the child's background. Although the results are not completely compatible (interviewing children vs. adults), we can still observe that children in children's homes experience significantly more risky situations than the average child population. The following chart (Figure 2) shows the differences.

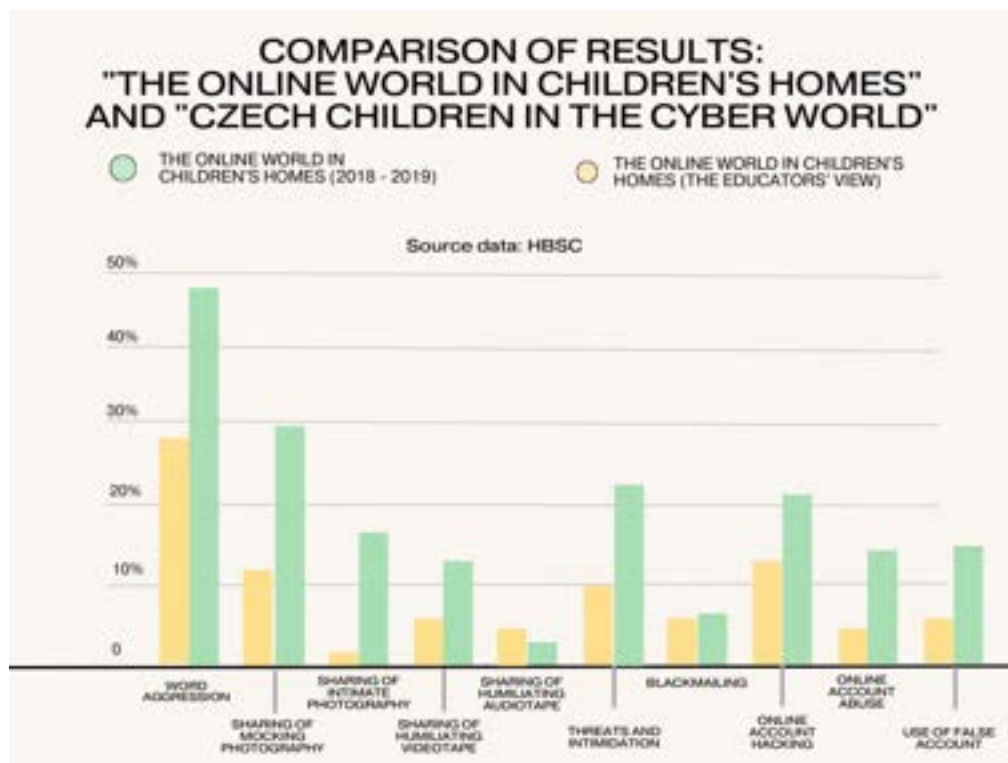


Figure 2: Comparison of results of: “The online world in children’s homes” and “Czech children in the cyber world”

3. Good practice examples

In our search for effective approaches to address the phenomenon of social media in schools and other contexts, we have discovered several intriguing examples of good practices. These examples can serve as valuable inspiration for further exploration within the ASAP project. We have explored various available sources, including existing pedagogical and educational approaches focused on digital and social media literacy. These approaches encompass not only school environments but also extend to other contexts, such as the local community. After careful consideration, we have selected the following examples that showcase innovative and successful strategies in this field.

3.1. Cyberbullying and the story of Nela as a lesson opener

The video game DigiStories: Nela - a story set in a social networking environment - helps to spark an open discussion in the classroom about experiences with cyberbullying. In an environment that is so familiar to the students.

The game's success lies mainly in its faithful simulation of children's conversations on social networks. The authenticity of the game draws the pupils into the storyline and through their own experience they understand not only the form but also the consequences of cyberbullying.

The story of the game is simple. Nela and Anežka have been friends for many years, go to school together and are often in contact through the social network DigiStories (a fictional platform that can resemble Instagram or YouTube). Nela makes videos in her spare time, which she posts on the internet, and she uploads one such video with Anežka. But after the video is published, something happens that she did not expect. An innocent joke turns into an incitement to insult and a long-established friendship is suddenly threatened.

The DigiStories: Nela video game works as an interactive and engaging lesson opener. Played collectively in the classroom through a projector, the game is controlled by the teacher and students decide what Nela's next step in the conversation will be. After about 15 minutes of play, the story ends and the teacher leads the discussion, which is an essential part of the lesson. In the game, the pupils become victims of cyberbullying and this powerful experience can trigger a range of feelings that need to be addressed through follow-up reflection.

The game is suitable for second-grade pupils aged 11-15, but teachers can also use it with older pupils at their discretion. The subsequent discussion can focus on the changes in our behaviour on social networks, the changes in the way we communicate and the specific language expressions that are typical for different generations of internet users.

Educational video games are characterised by interesting but non-distracting graphics, time-saving and simple rules and controls. And these principles are also followed by DigiStories: Nela. Teachers do not have to worry about complicated game environments or difficult controls. In addition, the prepared methodological recommendations also help the lesson to run smoothly.

The story of Nela has received special recognition from the jury of the EDUína 2021 Award for Innovation in Education. The video game was created by the JSNS educational programme of People in Need in cooperation with the award-winning game studio Charles Games. Teachers also contributed

to the creation of the game and since its publication in May 2021, it has been used in the classroom by educators from more than 400 schools.

The game and the accompanying methodological recommendations are available for free at [JSNS website](#).

3.2. One World in Schools

The JSNS Educational Programme (JSNS – Jeden svět na školách / OWIS – One World in Schools) is one of the educational programmes of the [People in Need](#) (People in Need is a Czech humanitarian, development, education and human rights organisation.)

Since 2001, they have been helping educate responsible young people who are able to find their way in today's world and approach information in an open and critical manner, they are not indifferent and they are interested in what is happening around them, which strengthens their active citizenship and civic engagement.

This training program provides teachers with an attractive form of audio-visual lessons comprising documentary films and methodological materials with activities, all of which are available online on their website. The materials aim to bring important topics and specific stories into schools. It focuses not only on modern Czechoslovak history, but also on the current issues of today's world. This includes exploring themes such as human rights, media education, environmental issues, civic engagement, and many others. What is more, all of the films are free-of-charge and legal.

Registration on the website is free for teachers and students in the Czech Republic in two languages ([Jeden svět na školách](#), in Czech; [OWIS](#), in English)

3.3. Caught in the Net

Two documentarians exploring the world of online sexual abuse of children succeed in turning an experiment into an act of social intervention.

Three young looking adult actresses have been given the roles of three 12 years old girls, whose role was to run the fake social media accounts in fake, but realistically looking bedrooms under the full observation of professional team of filmmakers, psychologists, lawyer, to show how easy it is for an adult man to contact young underage girls online without any knowledge of their parents. It shows what tactics the groomers use to gain very personal information and photos from the girls and what inappropriate graphical content groomers share with them.

The documentary "Caught in the Net" also has a children's version for viewers aged 12 and up. It is titled In the Net: Behind the School and includes several video inputs from actresses who warn what to look out for and what to do if something like this happens to a child. It is also less explicit and lasts only 63 min.

As a follow up action, a webpage has been established: <https://vsitifilm.cz/>

Here, all involved parties, a child, a parent, a teacher, and a possible predator, who have identified themselves during the watching of the movie, can find a professional guidance about what to do to prevent further abuse.

3.4. Bullying Minimization Program

Bullying Minimization Program is showing one possible way to reduce bullying in elementary schools. The programme consists of a series of four workshops followed by on-site consultations at the school.

The aim of the training is to teach teachers how to set a safe climate in the classroom, how to recognize bullying from friendly "teasing", how to identify the stage of bullying and choose the right way to deal with it, how to have conversations with the informant, the victim, the aggressor; how to safely investigate the situation, how and when to cooperate with other organizations (counseling centers, police, OSPOD (information portal for social and legal protection of children in the Czech Republic), etc.), how to communicate with parents and the public in case of bullying.

The aim of the consultations at the school is to help the team of teachers to improve the system of preventing and dealing with bullying at their school by putting the findings of the seminars into practice to work together to create their own tailor-made anti-bullying programme to support teamwork between teachers in preventing and dealing with bullying to work together to create crisis scenarios for cooperation in dealing with a current case of bullying.

4. Legislation and regulation

In the upcoming text, we will provide an overview of relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks currently in use in the Czech Republic pertaining to the use, misuse, and abuse of social media, as well as related topics. These legal and regulatory measures are designed to address the challenges and risks associated with the digital landscape and aim to protect individuals, particularly children and adolescents, from potential harm. By examining the existing legal framework, we can gain insights into the guidelines and safeguards put in place to promote responsible and safe social media usage.

4.1. School Prevention Methodologist

Pursuant to Decree No. 72/2005 Coll., on the provision of counselling services in schools and school counselling facilities, each school must establish the position of school prevention methodologist. The prevention methodologist works at the school as a provider of counselling services together with the educational counsellor, the school prevention methodologist, or the school psychologist/school special educator and their consultation team composed of selected school teachers.

The role of a prevention methodologist is crucial within the educational system, as they dedicate themselves to their work on a full-time basis. One of their key responsibilities is to create an inclusive environment for students with specific behavioral disorders, ensuring their smooth integration into the school community. They also coordinate the provision of counseling and prevention services to these students, collaborating with both the school and specialized facilities.

The extensive range of activities undertaken by prevention methodologists highlights their vital role, particularly in schools where students face social disadvantages that impact their educational needs. The effectiveness of their work depends greatly on their professional competence, the authority delegated by the school's management, and their personal qualities. It is essential for a prevention methodologist to possess comprehensive skills in order to carry out their duties in a manner that goes beyond mere formalities.

Prevention methodologists primarily focus on preventing socially pathological phenomena. They engage in methodological, coordination, and advisory activities related to the prevention of risky behaviors, including bullying, substance abuse, truancy, aggression, risky sexual behavior, and the risks of academic failure. They raise awareness among parents, teachers, and students, aiming for maximum primary prevention of these phenomena. Close collaboration with classroom teachers is established to foster a safe and healthy learning environment. They assess warning signs associated with potential risky behavior and provide counseling services. Additionally, they actively contribute to the development and implementation of the school's Minimum Prevention Program, while organizing lectures and discussions related to these issues.

4.2. School Prevention Program

The School Prevention Program (SPP), based on the Methodological Recommendation on Primary Prevention of Risky Behaviour in Children and Young People (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Document No. 21291/2010-28), plays a crucial role in addressing and managing risky behaviors within

schools in the Czech Republic. The SPP is a comprehensive framework that aims to prevent and intervene in socially pathological phenomena, ensuring the well-being and safety of students. It provides guidelines and recommended procedures for handling risky behaviors effectively.

When a risky behavior is observed or suspected, the recommended procedure is to follow a structured approach outlined in the SPP. The process typically involves the following steps:

- **Identification:** Teachers, prevention methodologists, or other school staff identify warning signs or indicators of risky behavior among students. These signs may include changes in behavior, academic performance, or social interactions.
- **Reporting:** Once warning signs are recognized, the staff member reports the concerns to the relevant authorities within the school, such as the prevention methodologist, school psychologist, or the designated person responsible for handling such cases.
- **Assessment:** The reported case is carefully assessed to gain a better understanding of the situation. This involves gathering information, consulting with other professionals if necessary, and evaluating the severity and nature of the risky behavior.
- **Intervention:** Based on the assessment, an appropriate intervention plan is developed. The plan may involve various actions, such as providing counseling or therapy to the student, involving parents or guardians in the process, implementing individualized support measures, or referring the student to external support services.
- **Monitoring and Follow-up:** The progress of the student is closely monitored, and regular follow-up meetings are conducted with the involved parties. This ensures that the intervention is effective and the student's well-being is continually evaluated.

The SPP emphasizes collaboration and coordination among different stakeholders, including teachers, prevention methodologists, school psychologists, school directors, parents, and external experts. Regular communication and exchange of information are essential to ensure a comprehensive approach to address risky behaviors (Kopecký & Szotkowski, 2017)

4.3. System for recording prevention activities – SEPA system

In the Czech Republic, the SEPA system (System for recording prevention activities, from the Czech: Systém evidence preventivních aktivit) is an online platform used for recording prevention activities in schools. It serves as a centralized database where schools can document and track their prevention efforts, ensuring a systematic and organized approach to addressing various social issues and risks.

The SEPA systém (Vacek & Roman, 2022) is designed to support the implementation of the Minimum Prevention Program, which is a set of preventive measures and activities that schools are required to undertake to promote a safe and healthy environment for students. By using the SEPA system, schools can effectively document their prevention activities and monitor their progress over time.

The online system for recording prevention activities aims to unify and simplify the planning of prevention activities in schools and their evaluation at the end of the year.

SEPA is based on the concept of the school's prevention programme. SEPA is aimed at managing information on prevention activities in schools so that it is uniform for all primary and secondary schools in the country.

SEPA provides schools and their staff involved in the implementation of risk behaviour prevention programmes with a tool to produce a comprehensive overview of primary prevention in schools. At the same time, SEPA is intended to facilitate the recording of information on all primary prevention activities in schools, which becomes the basis for cooperation with the regional prevention methodologist. By collecting information on the state of school-based primary prevention in the Czech Republic, SEPA enables the provision of aggregated data for the development of effective and desirable conceptual strategies and other support in the field of prevention at local, regional and national level.

5. Other resources and references

There are many diverse additional interesting sources that can serve as valuable inspiration for the further development of the ASAP project. These sources encompass various aspects of social media, (pre)adolescents, and related topics, providing insights from different perspectives. These portals provide information for Czech visitors.

Portál “Zdravá Generace” (Healthy Generation)

This [portal](#) explores the lifestyle of Czech children, drawing primarily on data from the international Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study.

The HBSC study is an international survey focusing on health, lifestyle and social determinants among 11, 13 and 15-year-old school children. The origin of the HBSC study dates back to the early 1980s. Regular data have been collected since 1983, when the World Health Organization (WHO) took over the study, and since 1985/86 surveys have been conducted in successively more member countries in regular 4-year cycles.

At present, the HBSC research network involves over 600 researchers from 51 countries, specialising in areas ranging from psychology to addiction medicine, to paediatrics, to education. Researchers are obliged to follow an international research study protocol, which prescribes to member countries how to select the research population, use standardised research instruments or data collection procedures. Further information on the HBSC study, its methodology and publication outputs can be found at www.hbsc.org and www.hbsc.cz.

Portál “Děti a media” (Children and Media)

The [website](#) serves as a platform for the presentation and exchange of expert opinions and also aims to offer help and information to parents who want to eliminate the risks of negative media influence on children.

Portál “Šance dětem” (Chance for Children)

The [website](#) offers quality information on children at risk in the Czech Republic. The articles you will find here are intended especially for families with children who need advice or to find their way around a problematic situation they are dealing with. They are also for all those interested in the topic of children at risk. Workers in the field of social work with families or students of related fields of study may also find important suggestions here. The portal also enables all donors who want to help those in need to obtain quality and trustworthy information.

6. Conclusions

Throughout this report, we have explored various aspects of social media use among preadolescents in the Czech Republic, drawing insights from available data, research studies, and relevant sources. Our findings shed light on the significant role that social media plays in the lives of children, while also highlighting the potential risks and challenges associated with its usage.

One key observation is the increasing prevalence of risky behaviors in the online world. Instances of cyberbullying, online addiction, and the misuse of social media platforms have shown an upward trend over the years. These findings emphasize the need for robust measures to ensure the safety and well-being of preadolescents in the digital realm.

The role of prevention methodologists in Czech schools has emerged as crucial in addressing these challenges. These professionals play a fundamental role in integrating pupils with specific behavioral disorders, coordinating counseling and prevention services, and promoting a safe and healthy school environment. Their activities range from raising awareness about social pathologies to implementing prevention programs, organizing lectures, and providing counseling.

Legislation and regulatory frameworks have also been explored, highlighting the importance of having guidelines and policies in place to address the misuse and abuse of social media. These frameworks aim to protect children, prevent cyberbullying, and provide support in cases of risky behavior or online fraud. Awareness of these regulations and their effective implementation is key to ensuring a safer online environment for preadolescents.

We have identified several examples of good practices and educational approaches that can serve as inspiration for further project development. These examples encompass digital and social media literacy initiatives, preventive measures against cyberbullying, and interventions to promote responsible online behavior. Incorporating these practices into our project can enhance its effectiveness and impact.

The findings presented in this report underscore the significance of addressing the challenges and risks associated with social media use among preadolescents. By leveraging the insights and recommendations derived from the available data and information, we can develop comprehensive strategies, interventions, and educational programs that empower children, educators, and parents to navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly.

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DESK RESEARCH

This report is part of the Erasmus+ project ASAP – *A Systemic Approach to social media and pre-adolescents through thinking skills education*.

It presents key findings from desk research conducted in Czech Republic with students, parents, teachers, and school leaders. The study explores the challenges of digital life in early adolescence and the educational needs of all involved.

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