

A high-angle photograph of five teenagers lying in a circle on a green lawn. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The teenagers are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual clothing like jeans and t-shirts. The word "BRIS" is superimposed in large white letters at the top of the image.

BRIS

**The children,
BRIS and it** 2009

About BRIS as an actor on the Internet, and about young people's contacts with BRIS about the Internet, computers and mobile phones.

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BRIS is a children's rights NGO running the national helpline for children in Sweden. Our ten thousands of contacts with children yearly, not only attest to children's confidence in us, but also give the base for our role as a true children's organisation. BRIS is well-known and highly esteemed throughout all levels of Swedish society.

On an international level, BRIS is also an active member of the global network of child helplines, Child Helpline International (www.childhelplineinternational.org).

"The Children, BRIS and IT" is a result of BRIS' involvement in the Safer Internet Plus Programme and the "The Young Internet", a safer internet campaign run in Sweden by the Swedish Media Council at the Government Offices. As part of the campaign, we made this study of children's contacts with us (through e-mails, chats and phone calls) concerning Internet and other ICT-related issues, and translated it into English. In Sweden, the report was first published in June, 2009.

For further information on our organisation and its services, please see below and visit our website: www.bris.se/english.

STOCKHOLM, SEPTEMBER 2009
Peter Irgens
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY, BRIS, Sweden

BRIS – Children's Rights in Society – is an NGO, a voluntary organisation with no party political or religious affiliation, which supports children and young people in distress and is a link between children, adults and the community.

The core of BRIS' activities is comprised of the Children's Helpline, BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat, to which children and young people up to the age of 18 can turn anonymously and free-of-charge when they need support from an adult. BRIS also works as an opinion maker and referral organisation to increase adults' respect for children as individuals. BRIS works for the full application of the principles established in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. BRIS uses its collective knowledge of the situation of children and young people to inform, influence and create opinion in children's rights issues at various levels. BRIS also accepts calls from adults who need someone to talk to about their own or other's children.

BRIS was founded in 1971 and is organised as one national and five regional offices. These are located in Malmö, Göteborg, Norrköping, Stockholm and Umeå. BRIS' activities are based on volunteer work and financial grants and donations from both private and public donors. BRIS has a total of about 600 volunteer workers who man the Children's Helpline, BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat. These volunteers are recruited, trained and supervised by employed BRIS personnel. The BRIS Adult Helpline – about Children is usually manned by employed BRIS representatives and costs as much as a regular phone call.

The Children's Helpline

– for those up to age 18.
0200-230 230
Monday to Friday:
3:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Saturday, Sunday and holidays:
3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

BRIS Adult Helpline – about Children
077-150 50 50
Monday to Friday: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

The BRIS-mail, The BRIS-chat, Foras

www.bris.se

The BRIS-mail provides personal answers within a few days.

The BRIS-Chat provides real time 1-to-1 chat.

In the Discussion Forum, which is also on BRIS.se, children and young people can communicate with each other under the oversight of an adult moderator.

” I just want to thank all the wonderful people on this website. logging in is uplifting and you realise you're not alone with your problems. it feels so good.

Main submission to the Discussion Forum

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BRIS

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! This report is not a translation of the entire Swedish version. The description of the method, and the results and discussion from this year's study together with conclusions, are summarized and can be found at page 13. This report can thus suitably be read together with last year's, completely translated, report.

Introduction

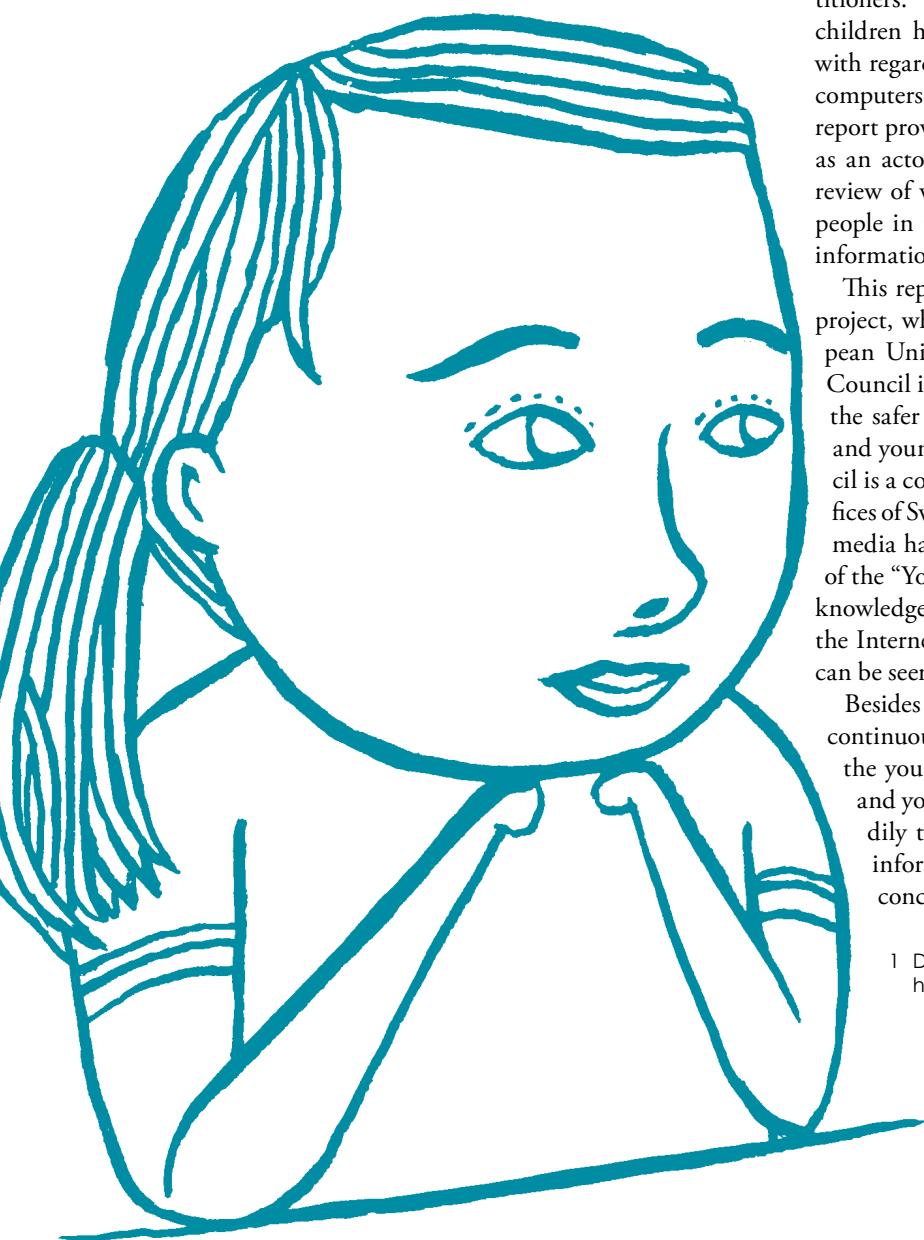
FOR THE THIRD consecutive year, BRIS has published a report specifically on the relationship between children, BRIS and IT. In practice, this involves a description of BRIS' web-based services for young people and a description of what children and young people tell us about their daily lives with the Internet, computers and mobile phones.

This year's report is a complement to last year's report¹, in which a great deal of attention was paid to an expanded results report and an internal discussion on the results. In this year's report, BRIS provides a more concise report of the results as well as a discussion that is instead conducted externally with researchers and practitioners. The reported results concern what children have told us in the support services with regard to matters concerning the Internet, computers and mobile phones. In addition, the report provides a more detailed account of BRIS as an actor on the Internet, in other words a review of what BRIS offers children and young people in the form of web-based support and information.

This report is a part of the "Young Internet" project, which is partially funded by the European Union and run by the Swedish Media Council in cooperation with BRIS and is about the safer use of the Internet among children and young people. The Swedish Media Council is a committee within the Government Offices of Sweden with the aim of working on the media habits of young people. One objective of the "Young Internet" project is to distribute knowledge about the lives of young people on the Internet, of which this report in particular can be seen as an example.

Besides this report, the project involves BRIS continuously increasing its knowledge about the young Internet. This is so that children and young people (as well as adults) can readily turn to BRIS to anonymously receive information about and discuss issues that concern the young Internet.

¹ Download last year's report.
http://www.bris.se/upload/Articles/it_rapport_300dpi.pdf



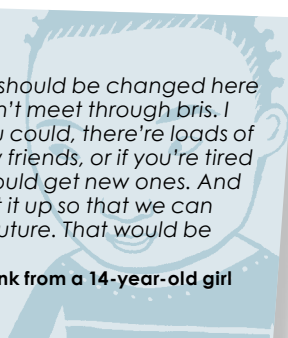
BRIS – an actor on the Internet

BRIS HAS BEEN an actor on the Internet since the launch of bris.se in 1998, although it actually was not until the BRIS-mail came underway in 2001 that the website acquired a proper function for children and young people. The Discussion Forum was launched in 2003, and since 2008, the BRIS-chat has been under development as a part of BRIS' ordinary support services. In addition to this, the website has been gradually developed to be able to offer children and young people growing opportunities to receive support and information. Over the years, BRIS has also been active in the development of some web-based services outside bris.se and continues to do so (read, for example, more about the Red Pages and the Website for Adults – about children, below).

As with all BRIS support services, the objective of the web-based services is to strengthen the rights of children and young people, improve their living conditions, help vulnerable children and young people in particular, and establish a possibility for them to have a dialogue with adults.

The part of the website addressed mainly to children and young people is called *For you who are young*.

In 2008, BRIS had more than 40,000 web-based contacts with children and young people in total. Over the year, there were around 225,000 visits to *For you who are young*.



Dear bris.se, I think some things should be changed here on the site. You say that you can't meet through bris. I think that's strange, why? If you could, there're loads of lonely kids who could find new friends, or if you're tired of your friends, like me, you could get new ones. And one more thing, can't you set it up so that we can chat with each other in the future. That would be good, hugs and bye.

Submission to Say what you think from a 14-year-old girl

Hi! Just want to say that it's really great that BRIS exists. I know a lot of kids my age who need to talk to BRIS. I'll try to encourage them! Have read almost everything on the website today and have now really understood what great work is done! Lotsa hugs!

Submission to Say what you think from a 15-year-old girl

Handling of the web-based support services

Just like with the Children's Helpline, BRIS' web-based support services are primarily handled by volunteer BRIS workers. To work as a volunteer, one must be at least 25 years of age and have some form of training/experience with children and young people. Once approved after a personal interview, volunteers attend an internal training programme approximately 40 hours long, which covers both theory and methodology. A number of training sessions together with experienced volunteers or BRIS representatives are also included.

Fully trained volunteers work in the support services once or twice a month, three to four hours at a time. In addition to this, volunteers should participate in the further training BRIS offers twice a term.

When volunteers work with support services, they do so in BRIS offices, in the same room with four to six other volunteers. There is also always an employed BRIS representative on site for support and guidance.

Anonymous and free

Under the heading *Just read* on the website (see below), anyone can receive support and information addressed to children and young people, without being registered or logged in.

The interactive pages can be found under the heading *Write yourself*, and to be able to enter, the child must register his or her gender and year of birth and submit a username and password. This means that the young person is anonymous towards BRIS and other children on the website.

Every time a child contacts BRIS, certain information is noted about the contact, but never the child's name or other personal data. BRIS saves all e-mails, chat logs and submissions in a database. Statistics are continuously compiled based on the information saved. In BRIS' outreach work, we often use quotes from children and young people, but identification data is removed so that no child will be able to be recognised.

Nothing on *For you who are young* entails any cost to the child.



The BRIS-mail

THE BRIS-MAIL was launched in 2001 after BRIS' office personnel received growing numbers of e-mails from children on serious subjects.

Children and young people can write to the BRIS-mail around the clock, and they always receive a personal response. BRIS has the goal of answering within three to four days and never more than seven days. During 2008, the children had to wait an average of slightly more than 2.5 days for a response.

The children's e-mails can be about just about anything and can be up to 32,000 characters long.

The BRIS-mail is a part of the interactive part of the website, *Write yourself*. This means that the children must have registered as per above to be able to write and receive responses. Both their own e-mails and the responses they receive from BRIS are gathered in their personal inbox on the BRIS website, in other words, no e-mails go home to any child's private e-mail address.

The children have no repeated contact with the exact same volunteer, but rather different volunteers answer each time and they cannot see the child's previous e-mails.

The objective of the BRIS-mail is to offer children and young people contact with an adult in written form. This involves reading and understanding e-mails and supporting and affirming the children and young people who need an adult contact in the responses. It also involves informing children and young people about their rights based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and about the authorities in society that are responsible for their welfare.

Just airing their feelings in writing often fills a purpose in itself. The actual writing of e-mail has an inherent supportive effect and function.

2008

In 2008, slightly more than 9,000 e-mails were received by the BRIS-mail. Of these, just over 8,000 e-mails received supportive responses. Slightly more than 1,000 e-mails contained too little information for it to be possible to provide a supportive response. Instead, these were given a brief response with information about the BRIS-mail.

On average, every supportive contact took barely 24 minutes for the volunteer to answer.

E-mails with supportive responses amounted

to 8,029, which is an 18% decrease compared with last year (compare with the Children's Helpline where the number of supportive contacts increased by 13%²).

The average age among those who e-mailed was 14.8 years. Of those e-mailing, 88% were girls and 12% were boys. This is a somewhat higher average age than on the Children's Helpline and a much smaller proportion of boys.

The contacts on the BRIS-mail differ somewhat compared with those on the Children's Helpline. Above all, it is much more common that the contacts concern poor mental health among children on the BRIS-mail – nearly 30% of the contacts in 2008 were related to this topic. Among these, e-mails about both thoughts of suicide and self-destructive behaviour are common. E-mails concerning identity development and the body/looks, for example, are significantly more common on the BRIS-mail than the Children's Helpline. However, contacts concerning bullying and various forms of physical and sexual abuse are less common than on the Children's Helpline.



I think this whole BRIS thing is excellent! Thumbs up for you. But it takes far too long to get a response to the e-mails. Usually when somebody writes you an e-mail, the person actually wants an answer as fast as possible. Please BRIS, put a little more time into the e-mail.

Submission to Say what you think from a 15-year-old girl

E-mail from a child:

My best friend doesn't feel good. She's having problems with her boyfriend again and now she's almost stopped eating and has begun to cut herself. I can't handle it any longer, just looking on when she does this to herself, but she doesn't care about what I say. Soon, I'll feel like I can't be bothered.

Response from BRIS:

Hi! It's great that you write us your thoughts! You say that you soon won't be able to deal with caring about your friend whose doing poorly. A good friend offers support and listens, and you seem to feel a great sense of responsibility for your friend. Of course, you should be there for each other, but your friend is also personally responsible for how she feels. From your description, it sounds as if she is having pretty big problems right now, so maybe it's time to make sure she gets more help. When you have fought for and supported a friend for a long time, you can end up feeling a bit empty if nothing comes of it. This is normal. Maybe you can't get her to feel better all on your own. She herself has to want to feel better and dare to accept support from somebody else. How much do her parents know about how she is feeling? You have a heavy burden to bear if you are the only one who knows. Maybe you can go along for support if your friend wants to talk with an adult. Besides her parents, this could be the school nurse or a counsellor at the youth counselling centre, for example, or some other adult she trusts. And don't forget that you might also need somebody to talk to. All the best, BRIS

An edited example from Read regular e-mails and responses on the website.

² For more information on both the Children's Helpline and other support services, see the BRIS Report on www.bris.se/english, direct download http://www.bris.se/upload/Material/theBRISreport_2009.pdf



The BRIS-chat

THE BRIS-CHAT was tested on a small scale from December 2007 to April 2008 with the help of financing from the postal code lottery (Postkodlotteriet). The evaluation showed that the BRIS-chat was very much appreciated by both the children and BRIS workers, and was consequently resumed in September 2008 even though long-term financing was not secured. In March 2009, financing was secured from the State Inheritance Fund for the development of the BRIS-chat for three years. The plan is for the BRIS-chat to have opening hours comparable to those of the Children's Helpline in three years and for BRIS to be able to continue running it as an ordinary support service.

The objective of the BRIS-chat is to support and affirm the children and young people who need an adult contact through a chat line, while also informing children and young people about their rights based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and about the authorities in society that are responsible for their welfare.

Many children say that one advantage of the BRIS-chat is not having to talk on the phone, but still getting in touch with BRIS directly, without having to wait for several days as with the BRIS-mail.

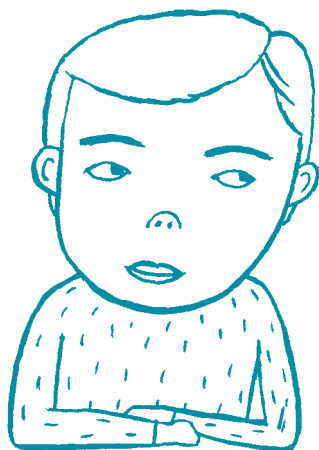
In 2008, the BRIS-chat was open from January to April and September to December, two to three times a week, usually between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The BRIS-chat is a part of the interactive part of the website, Write yourself, which means that the children must have registered as per above to be able to chat. The chat logs are collected in their personal inbox on the BRIS website.

On the BRIS-chat, one child chats with one adult at BRIS, no outsiders can monitor the chat conversation. The child cannot choose to chat with a certain volunteer, who is instead chosen at random, unless the child returns to the same chat session, where there is a possibility to continue chatting with the same volunteer.

Just like on the Children's Helpline, the child can agree with the volunteer that the chat should be transferred to an employed BRIS representative. The BRIS representative can then offer the child to have a repeated contact with the BRIS representative through a special phone number. This is only done if the child wants it him or herself.

In purely technical terms, the BRIS-chat functions roughly like MSN. The child and the adult have a dialogue with each other based on short messages (up to a maximum of 250 characters)



that are sent between them. As it progresses, the entire conversation is gathered in the chat log that both can see.

The chats can be about anything and have no stated time limit, although an idea is included in the BRIS method that chat conversations such as these are seldom helped by lasting more than an hour. To-date, the chats have taken an average of approximately 45 minutes.

During the opening hours of the chat line, a number of children can join a queue. If the queue is full, they can try again later. BRIS lets all of the children who have joined the queue during opening hours chat.

2008

In 2008, BRIS had 936 chats with children and young people. Of these, 805 became supportive chats. The rest were either completely empty or provided too little information to be able to provide supportive responses.

The average age of the children on the chat line was 14.4 years, which is somewhat higher than on the Children's Helpline and somewhat lower than the BRIS-mail. Of those on the chat line, 86% were girls and 14% were boys. This is a somewhat larger proportion of boys than on the BRIS-mail, and quite a bit lower proportion boys than on the Children's Helpline.

In 2008, the supportive contacts in the BRIS-chat were about roughly the same things as in BRIS' other child contacts. Some differences can nonetheless be noted, including the fact that it was nearly equally common that the chats were about poor mental health among children as on the BRIS-mail (and much more common than on the Children's Helpline), and that contacts about self-destructiveness and eating disorders in particular were even more common than on the BRIS-mail. Otherwise, the chats were more commonly about friends and loneliness compared with other child contacts, while just like on the BRIS-mail, contacts about bullying and various forms of physical and sexual abuse were significantly less common. Contacts on the subject of sex were also much less common on the BRIS-chat, both compared to the BRIS-mail and the Children's Helpline.

BRIS: Hi and welcome to the BRIS-chat, my name is Anna.

CHILD: Heh, ok. So I have loads of problems.

BRIS: Ok, where do you want to begin?

CHILD: My parents are divorcing right now and I've got problems with my friends. My dad is completely sick. He's stalked us and bombed us with texts.

BRIS: Sounds tough.

CHILD: I'm really worried and am so tired. Can't deal with all this anymore..!

BRIS: Do you want to tell a bit more about it

CHILD: Well, my dad is mentally ill and he's controlling and that. And he won't leave us alone. He's gonna walk over dead bodies to get in touch with us in the best way possible.

BRIS: Does he say that?

CHILD: He hasn't said so exactly but he's said he's gonna do everything to get back with mum again. And he's coming around my little sister's school all the time.

BRIS: How were things before? Before the divorce I mean? With your dad?

CHILD: I've never had a good relationship with him. EVER.

BRIS: Ok, so actually it's not the divorce itself that is tough if I understand you right. But rather how he's acting now.

CHILD: Yeah, and that I can't deal with his behaviour and what he's doing.

BRIS: Yes, that is understandable...

CHILD: I don't know what I should do...

BRIS: So how are things with you, your mum and your sister otherwise, when things are good?

(Here, the chat continued for about another 30 minutes with around another 20 lines from BRIS and the child – before a conclusion neared,)

CHILD: But when is the BRIS-chat open next time? Do I need to go through the same things again?

BRIS: Take up what you feel is important for that time. And you do have your counsellor who knows everything and who you can talk to in the meantime, and your mum of course!

CHILD: Alright. Thank you SO much for letting me chat with you. I feel a lot better. :)

BRIS: Thanks yourself, it was fun chatting with you! So should we say good-bye?

CHILD: haha, yup. Bye, have fun! :)

Hugs

Chat with a girl, age 14³

Hi, it made me really sad when I saw that the BRIS-chat had been closed. I actually don't know if I'll be able to cope without it. It helped me a lot, and sometimes I wanted nothing more than to chat with you. I understand if you can't do anything about it, I guess it really doesn't matter what I think on my own, but I wanted to tell you. I've been thinking about calling you, but I don't dare. I need your help, direct help, not e-mail that takes several days to get an answer. Please, I really want the chat line to open.

E-mail from a 15-year-old girl

3 Examples in the report are gathered from the BRIS-mail, the BRIS-chat and the BRIS Forum. All examples are authentic, but edited and shortened, as well as redone so that no individual child can be identified.

The BRIS Forum

THE BRIS FORUM comprises three different parts: The Discussion Forum, My Poem and the Source of Joy.

The objective of the BRIS Forum is to give children and young people the opportunity to get support from other young people and the possibility of expressing their own opinions, to unload by writing and to read others' experiences on important and current matters.

The BRIS Forum is a part of the interactive part on the website, Write yourself. This means that the children must have registered as per above to be able to make submissions.

Similar forums exist in many other communities for children and young people. The unique aspect of the BRIS Forum is that all submissions are read by an adult at BRIS before they are published. This gives BRIS the possibility of refusing submissions that BRIS for some reason feels does not provide constructive support to the child him or herself and/or the children who will read the submission. BRIS can also judge whether the child in the submission compromises his or her anonymity, which is not allowed. Of course, these are difficult judgements to make and the decisions are based on a continuous discussion within BRIS. When a submission is not approved, the child always receives a personal message from BRIS with an explanation and possible referrals to BRIS' other support services or to other services that BRIS finds appropriate. Nonetheless, the main rule is that the submissions are approved, and in 2008, more than 90% of all submissions were approved. In rare cases, BRIS may choose to write a submission itself to develop or guide the discussion.

I just want to thank all the wonderful people on this website. logging in is uplifting and you realise you're not alone with your problems. it feels so good. everyone's nice to everyone, and cares. at the same time that you get help yourself you can give something back. It also feels good to be able to say just what you feel, because you don't know who the people are, thanks to everyone who cares you're wonderful :) Hugs

Main submission to the Discussion Forum

Discussion Forum

The Discussion Forum is by far the largest service within the BRIS Forum. In 2008, nearly 30,000 submissions were made to the Discussion Forum. Of these, just over 27,000 were posted.

On the Discussion Forum, BRIS has chosen a few overall themes, such as School, Being Young and Violence and Abuse. From these, the child

can choose a theme under which to write his or her main submission. Once the main submission has been read and posted by BRIS, other children can read the submission on the site and write a response. All responses must also be approved by BRIS before they can be published. The submissions most often concern children who describe an experience and/or ask a specific question, and then other children and young people offer their experiences of the matter described or the question.

A thread on the Discussion Forum, in other words a main submission with its associated responses/submissions, is deleted after no new submission has been made for ten days.

Main submission to the Discussion Forum

My dad beats, threatens and violates me. been abused and everything for almost 7 years. i can't take it any more. please can somebody help me. do you have any advice. please help me. What can I do???

Response

*Oh, how awful that must be!
You can either
* go live with your mum (if possible?)
* call the police and report the child abuse!
* contact social services
* talk to your dad about it, suggest he go to a psychologist
* call bris and you'll get even more advice! :)*

*I'm really keeping my fingers crossed for you!
Loads of hugs and Merry Christmas :D*

Response

*Just 1 thing:
Don't think, "well, he'll stop when I grow up", just go straight to the police or social services and tell them*

Response

What a pig! A guy that meant a lot to me was abused from when he was little up to now... He stood up to him and showed he was tough and not afraid anymore and refused to take any more shit! Then his dad changed and sought help. Actually, he had a mum he went to now and then (who didn't know about it). I don't know what you should do, but hope it works out

Excerpts from an example of a thread on the Discussion Forum

My Poem

Children and young people can write a short or long text to My Poem if they want to share with others on the site. All of the texts are published, except those refused based on the grounds described above. Other children and young people have the opportunity of submitting a brief comment to each text, which BRIS expressly wants to consist of positive feedback. Discussions or longer experiential exchanges are referred to the Discussion Forum.

In 2008, 1,084 submissions were published on My Poem⁴.

On both the Discussion Forum and My Poem, each submission can be up to a maximum of 2,000 characters long.

Rare flowers

Real friends are like rare flowers. You can't hurt them, you can't let them down, you can't step on them and you absolutely cannot forget them, the rare flowers... I thought I was a rare flower, such a rare flower that couldn't be treated like that...but I was wrong.

Submission to My Poem from a 14-year-old girl

Source of Joy

The Source of Joy is only open to submissions with a spirit of hope, joy and love. Because children can talk about virtually anything on all of BRIS' support services no matter how serious the issue may be, the services and the greater part of the website are often characterised by extremely serious topics. Consequently, the idea behind the Source of Joy is to offer a free-zone, where one should be able to share and enjoy various expressions of hope, joy and love in particular.

In 2008, 1,232 submissions were published on the Source of Joy.

Every submission to the Source of Joy may be up to a maximum of 150 characters long.

Music makes me happy, gives me strength to fight. If there were no music, I wouldn't be here.

Submission to Source of Joy from a 14-year-old girl

My grandma helps me through everything, although she doesn't know it.

Submission to Source of Joy from a 16-year-old girl

⁴ Up to November 2008, My Poem was called Poems and Short Stories.



Just read

BESIDES THE INTERACTIVE possibilities described above, BRIS offers a section where one just reads and takes it in – Just read.

Just read consists mainly of all current submissions to each part of the **BRIS Forum**, which everyone – even those not registered – can read and learn from.

The heading **Read regular e-mails and responses** is home to two different parts. E-mails and responses is a collection of e-mails to the BRIS-mail and the responses the children have received. The e-mails have been both shortened and re-written so that nobody will be able to be recognised. The responses have also been shortened a bit. They are arranged under various topics, such as Life, Sexuality and Problems at home.

In **Questions for the lawyer**, there are a number of common questions that the BRIS lawyer receives and has received from children and young people, and responses to them. These questions are also organised under various topics, such as Economy, Crime and Adoption.

In addition to this, a large amount of material about BRIS and the issues that BRIS works with is available under the heading **Knowledge and information**. Here, in particular, are a number of **Fact sheets** about important and serious subjects such as Thoughts of suicide and Bullying. The fact sheets are texts that describe how one can think about the specific types of problems and how one can help and get help.

Here, one can also find **the BRIS Report** for the year and **the Celebrity Pictures** for the year, as well as information on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

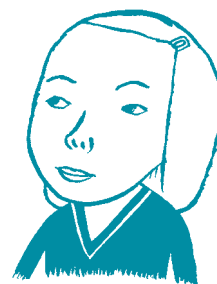
In addition to this, there is also a great deal of material about BRIS and about important topics on the part of the website that is more for adults, which children and young people can also read, of course.

Other

Say what you think is a part of the website addressed to adult visitors just as much as to children and young people. Through Say what you think, anyone can submit their views or questions about BRIS support services and especially those on the website. These submissions are not shown externally on the website, but are rather solely used internally within BRIS. If anyone had a concrete question, they can get a direct response to their private e-mail address. On average, approximately 20 submissions are received per day, and the majority are from children and young people. These submissions are of great importance to BRIS' quality assurance and development of the web-based services.

The Red Pages is a project that was begun in 2003 and was conducted by BRIS on behalf of the World Childhood Foundation. Since 2004, BRIS has expanded the Red Pages' database, which currently contains thousands of different organisations and services in support of children and young people in municipalities throughout the country. These range from nationwide organisa-

The Red Pages are mainly a search engine where children and young people under the age of 18 can find support from knowledgeable and committed adults.



tions to smaller, local endeavours. The content is based on the self-registration of on-going activities, but everything is reviewed from a security point of view before approval and publication.

The Red Pages are mainly a search engine where children and young people under the age of 18 can find support from knowledgeable and committed adults, and the objective is for children and young people to be able to find information about help in their local area, in a fast way with secured integrity.⁶

Squill.se is a tool that BRIS helped develop and operated together with the company, Netclean. There, children and young people were able to report if a person behind a certain username had behaved badly on the Internet. They were also able to check a username to see if, based on the reports of others, there was reason to not trust the person behind the username.

After having been involved in operating squill.se for two years, BRIS concluded this work at the end of 2008 due to difficulties in securing long-term financing.

The Website for Adults – about children is a new project that BRIS has conducted since the beginning of 2009 with financing from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The objective is to expand the opportunities for adults to receive web-based support in matters concerning children. The site should be a complement to the BRIS Adult Helpline – about children. The Website for Adults - about children is being developed in cooperation with the Stiftelsen Allmänna Barnhuset foundation, Skandia Ideas for Life and the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and will be managed by BRIS. An initial version of the site is scheduled to be available in December 2009.⁵

Otherwise, BRIS has an ambition of continuing to develop the web-based support services, in part by ensuring that the website is always as user-friendly as possible, as well as by testing new services and new ways of monitoring the needs of

children and young people (and adults) to communicate and find information on important and current matters.

An important ambition in this area is for BRIS to become more visible on other websites visited by children and young people, which may mean that BRIS should have its own profile on large and important sites, and also hold open group chats on and in cooperation with the websites. BRIS workers already chat with readers on various Internet magazines and newspapers now and then, based on a special topic.

BRIS is conducting internal discussions with regard to creating space on the longer term for continuously having group chats with children on bris.se regarding important and current topics, as an example of the ambition to monitor the needs of children and young people in the best way possible.

⁵ For more information, please contact Maria Rådlund Qvennerstedt, +46 70 160 88 15.



Summary of the method, results and discussion

THIS IS A summary of the method, results and discussion from the study on the children, BRIS and IT 2009. This summary can be used as a complement to the available complete translation of The children, BRIS and IT 2008.

Method

In last year's report, the results were based on a text search of BRIS' supportive contacts on the BRIS-mail and the Children's Helpline from the entire year of 2007. To follow up and do a comparison with these results, BRIS did a similar text search this year, but only for the months of March and April 2008. Another difference is that the text search also includes the BRIS-chat this year, which was not under way at the same time in 2007. In addition, a text search has been done of all main submissions made to the Discussion Forum during 2008. Lastly, a reading was done of the e-mail responses, call descriptions and chat logs from 2008 that belonged to contacts noted in BRIS' ordinary documentation for the contact area "Computers/Internet/Mobile phones."

Results

A text search of all supportive child contacts (except those in the BRIS Forum) during March and April showed that 9.8% of the contacts were about the Internet, computers and mobile phones. Taking this percentage for the supportive child contacts of the whole year (21,401), slightly more

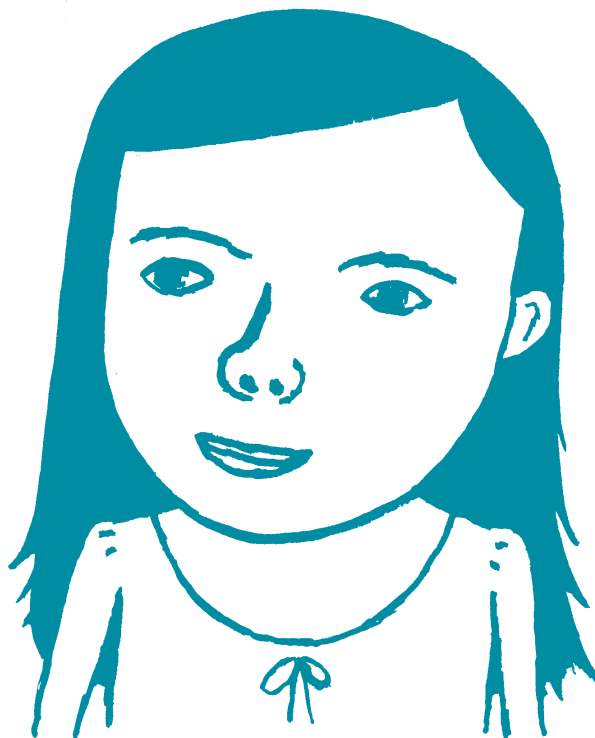
than 2,100 would be IT-related. Last year, the proportion of IT-related contacts was somewhat lower, 8.9% or 1,895 contacts. This means an increase of 13% over last year.

The average age of the children in these IT-related contacts was 14.4, which is only slightly lower than last year and only slightly higher than for all supportive child contacts in 2008. The gender distribution was 80% girls and 20% boys, which is a somewhat higher proportion of boys than last year, and a somewhat lower proportion of boys compared with all supportive child contacts.

Of the contacts, 69% were noted to be about computers, 17% about mobile phones and 14% about both. Added together, 83% were about computers and 31% about mobile phones, which is a clear increase in the proportion about mobile phones compared with 2007.

The distribution across different topics and themes in the contacts was largely the same as last year. Love and friend relationships was still what most contacts were about. However, contacts were also commonly about topics such as poor mental health and humiliation, threats and abuse. Just like last year, a marginal, but yet remarkable part of the contacts were about the young people having problems with their parents' use of IT. Regardless of what the contacts were about, it was common that the relative anonymity and pictures, videos and webcams were of central importance in one way or another.

The text search of the Discussion Forum gave a distribution that was similar to all other con-



tacts. Nonetheless, some differences are worth noting. There was a clearly larger proportion that was about love and friend relationships. However, there was a markedly smaller proportion about humiliation/threats/abuse, poor mental health and parents' IT. The contacts also described a connection to violence in real life markedly less often. Moreover, both the express lack and presence of adults were significantly less prominent.

In BRIS' ordinary documentation from the support services in 2008, it was noted that 2.4% (519) of the contacts were about Computers/Mobile phones/Internet. This is a clear increase from last year's 1.7%. Comparing the number of contacts between the years, this is an increase of nearly 50%.

Discussion

This year, BRIS chose to discuss the results of the report with two external experts:

Cecilia Löfberg is a Ph.D. at the Department of Education at Stockholm University, and has written the dissertation *The Arena of Possibilities? Discussions of children and young people about girls, boys, feelings and sexuality in a virtual arena*.

Maria Soares Lindberg is in charge of Fryshuset's Nätvandrararna (Net Wanderers). The Net Wanderers are online on various websites and answer young people's questions on everything from relationships to bullying.

This discussion focused on three themes that felt particularly interesting and current.

Changed child role requires new treatment

The Internet offers many new possibilities for children and young people in their identity formation, but the same possibilities can also entail risks of victimisation. Therefore, it is important that parents and other adults increase their presence on and knowledge about the young Internet.

The Internet and poor mental health

The Internet appears to be a forum that is particularly well suited for young people when they try to handle their poor mental health. A particular confirmation of this is that the contacts on the BRIS-chat and the BRIS-mail are much more commonly about severe mental illness than on the Children's Helpline.

Handling sex and love

The Internet has created new conditions for both having sex and discussing sex; one can have sex with the help of webcams and openly discuss one's experiences. For many young people, these new conditions are considered to be natural and normal, while they seem foreign and frightening to adults.

Conclusion

BASED ON THE report's results and discussion, BRIS has a few proposals of what various adults can do to better be on hand for young people on the Internet and through computers and mobile phones.

BRIS believes that parents, and other important adults, must strive to create meetings and conversations with their children and adolescents in and about IT-related daily life.

BRIS believes that professionals around children and young people must be more accessible over the Internet and text messaging.

BRIS believes that schools and other institutions that work with children and young people must ensure that the staff continuously have access to new knowledge about the young Internet.

BRIS believes that the owners and those in charge of websites with many children and young people must take responsibility for decreasing the victimisation of children and young people there.

BRIS believes that it is time for the state/municipality/county council to operate their own interactive youth websites with full adult guarantees, as a complement to the regular youth recreation centres.



THOMAS JONSLAND, one of the authors of the report, is the Coordinator of web-based support services at BRIS. Those interested can contact him for lectures or participation in seminars or debates based on the content of the report. E-mail your interest to thomas.jonsland@bris.se

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