



BRIS

The children, BRIS and IT 2010

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

BRIS' Offices

BRIS
Karlavägen 121
SE-115 26 Stockholm
Tel: +46 (0)8-598 888 00
Fax: +46 (0)8-598 888 01
E-mail: info@BRIS.se

BRIS region Nord
(Northern Region)
Kungsgatan 36
SE-903 25 Umeå
Tel: +46 (0)90-203 65 10
Fax: +46 (0)90-203 65 11
E-mail: BRIS.nord@BRIS.se

BRIS region Väst
(Western Region)
Hvitfeldtsgratan 14
SE-411 20 Göteborg
Tel: +46 (0)31-750 11 30
Fax: +46 (0)31-750 11 31
E-mail: BRIS.vast@BRIS.se

BRIS region Mitt
(Central Region)
Karlavägen 121
SE-115 26 STOCKHOLM
Tel: +46 (0)8-598 888 10
Fax: +46 (0)8-598 888 11
E-mail: BRIS.mitt@BRIS.se

BRIS region Syd
(Southern Region)
Östra Rönneholmsv. 7
SE-211 47 Malmö
Tel: +46 (0)40-690 80 70
Fax: +46 (0)40-690 80 71
E-mail: BRIS.syd@BRIS.se

BRIS region Öst
(Eastern Region)
Korsgatan 2, Hus E
SE-602 33 Norrköping
Postal address: BRIS
SE-601 86 Norrköping
Tel: +46 (0)11-440 05 50
Fax: +46 (0)11-440 05 51
E-mail: BRIS.ost@BRIS.se

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 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 discussion forum submissions) concerning Internet and other ICT-related issues, and translated it into English. For further information on our organisation and its services, please see below and visit our website: www.bris.se/english.

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

STOCKHOLM, JUNE 2010

Peter Irgens, BRIS

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 116 111, the 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 associations. Offices 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 over 600 volunteer workers who man the Children's Helpline – BRIS 116 111, the 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
– BRIS 116 111
– for those up to age 18.
116 111

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

www.barnperspektivet.se

(TheChildPerspective.se

– BRIS for adults)

The BRIS-mail

The BRIS-chat

The BRIS Forum

www.BRIS.se

”The BRIS-chat has helped me a lot, at times I want nothing more than to chat with you. I’ve been thinking about calling you, but I don’t dare. I need your help, direct help, not mail that takes several days to get an answer.

Mail from girl, age 15

Contents

The children, BRIS and IT

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

4 Introduction

4 BRIS – an actor on the Internet

Handling of the web-based support services 5

Anonymous and free 5

The BRIS-mail 6
2009 6

The BRIS-chat 7
2009 8

The BRIS Forum 9
Discussion Forum 9
My Poem 10
Source of Joy 10

Just read 11

Other 11
Say what you think 11
Barnperspektivet.se 11

12 Materials and method

12 Overall results

The BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat 12
Discussion Forum 13
Other 13

14 Results topic by topic

Love and friend relationships 14
Handling and use of IT 15
Humiliation, threats and abuse 16
Sexually related 17
Poor mental health 19
Parents’ IT 19
Adult presence 20

21 Discussion

Important adult presence 21
Humiliation in a no-man’s land 21
An explosion of pictures and videos 21
Testing sex on the Internet 22
A relative anonymity and distance 22
Internet best for poor mental health 22
BRIS’ web-based development 23

23 Summary

Introduction

For the fourth 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..

For the fourth 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 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.

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. Moreover, in spring 2010, BRIS launched a special website with support for adults about children – www.barnperspektivet.se ('thechildperspective.se').

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 2009, BRIS had approximately 40,000 web-based contacts with children and young people in total

Handling of the web-based support services

Just like with BRIS 116 111, 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 representatives¹ 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 supervision.

Anonymous and free

On the website, anyone can receive support and information addressed to children and young people, without being registered or logged in.

For the children to be interactive and able to write on BRIS' website themselves, they must register. They submit their gender and year of birth and 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.

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**



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

¹ BRIS representatives (BRIS-ombud) are the employed staff at BRIS, recruiting, training and supervising the volunteers.

“Children and young people can write to the BRIS-mail around the clock.”

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 2009, the children had to wait an average of slightly less 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.

2009

In 2009, 8,267 e-mails were received by the BRIS-mail. Of these, 7,440 e-mails received supportive responses. 827 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 7,440, which is an 7% decrease compared with last year².

2 For further statistical information on both the BRIS-mail and other support services, see the BRIS Report on www.bris.se/english, direct download http://www.bris.se/upload/Material/theBRISreport_2010.pdf



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

The average age among those who e-mailed was 14.5 years. Of those e-mailing, 90% were girls and 10% were boys. This is a somewhat higher average age than on BRIS 116 111 and a much smaller proportion of boys.

The contacts on the BRIS-mail differ somewhat compared with those on the telephone. 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 2009 were related to this topic. Among these, e-mails about both thoughts of suicide and self-destructive behaviour are common. Also e-mails concerning the body/looks or love, for example, are more common on the BRIS-mail than on the telephone. However, contacts concerning school and various forms of abuse are less common than on the telephone.



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.

“The BRIS-chat is getting in touch with BRIS without having to talk on the phone”

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 Post code lottery (Postkodlotteriet). The evaluation showed that the BRIS-chat was very much appreciated by both the children and BRIS' helpline workers. In March 2009, financing was secured from the State Inheritance Fund for the development of the BRIS-chat for three years. The plan for these three years is for the BRIS-chat to steadily increase opening days and hours and for BRIS to beyond the project time 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 2010, the BRIS-chat is open all year, except eight weeks during the summer, four days a week between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The BRIS-chat is a part of the interactive part of the website, 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 BRIS 116 111, 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



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

the BRIS method that chat conversations such as these are seldom good and helpful if they last more than an hour. In 2009 the chats lasted an average of 43.5 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.

One helpline worker never chats with more than one child at the same time.

2009

In 2009, BRIS had 2,300 chats with children and young people. Of these, 1,838 became supportive chats. The rest were either completely empty or provided too little information to be able to provide supportive responses. The number of supportive chats increased by over 100 percent in 2009 compared to 2008, due to the expansion of availability provided during the year.

The average age of the children on the chat line was 14.7 years, which is higher than both on BRIS 116 111 and on the BRIS-mail. Of those on the chat line, 88% were girls and 12% were boys. This is a somewhat larger proportion of boys than on the BRIS-mail, and quite a bit lower proportion boys than on BRIS 116 111.

What the supportive contacts in the BRIS-chat were about differed to some compared to BRIS' other child contacts. That the chats were about poor mental health among children was nearly equally common as on the BRIS-mail (and much more common than on BRIS 116 111), and 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 family conflicts and loneliness compared with other child contacts, while contacts about bullying, love and sex were significantly less common.

³ 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. 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 2009, 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 by a girl

Discussion Forum

The Discussion Forum is by far the largest service within the BRIS Forum. In 2009, 29,178 submissions were made to the Discussion Forum. Of these, just over 26,814 were posted.

After several years of large increases in the number of submissions, the 2009 figure rather decreased somewhat compared to that of 2008 – just as was the case for the other services within the BRIS Forum. The average age for those writing submissions was 14.4 years, which is slightly lower than for the other web-based services but somewhat higher than on the telephone. The gender distribution was 91 percent girls and 9 percent boys.

“The Discussion forum is a striking confirmation of how well and readily children and young people support and are there for each other.

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.

The Discussion forum is a striking confirmation of how well and readily children and young people support and are there for each other.

Main submission to the Discussion Forum by a 14-year-old boy

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 from girl, age 14

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 from boy, age 15

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 from girl, age 14

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

In 2009, 1,080 submissions were published on My Poem. The average age for those writing submissions here was 13.9 years, which is slightly lower than for the Discussion forum. The gender distribution was 95 percent girls and 5 percent boys, which is a yet slightly lower proportion of boys than in the Discussion forum..

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**

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

In 2009, 1,130 submissions were published on the *Source of Joy*. And the average age and gender distribution were about the same as in My poem.

Just read

BESIDES THE INTERACTIVE possibilities described above, BRIS offers a section at the website where one can choose to just read without registering or logging in.

In particular, one can read all current posts within **BRIS' Forum**.

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 or get help.

Here, one can also find the **BRIS Report** for the year and the **Idol cards** 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.

” Just read, without registering or logging in.



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.

Barnperspektivet.se (Thechildperspective.se) is a new website which BRIS launched in May 2010. The site is operated with financial support from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and Skandia Ideas for life. 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. Through barnperspektivet.se BRIS wants to highlight children's perspectives, spread and increase the knowledge about children's needs and rights, support parents and other adults in their relationships to children and encourage adults to act on child maltreatment. Barnperspektivet.se is being developed in cooperation with Skandia Ideas for Life and the Swedish National Institute of Public Health.

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 part of this work 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. 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.

Materials and method

IN ORDER TO CAPTURE and obtain a perception of what children and young people tell us about matters concerning the Internet, computers and mobile phones, we have done a text search among BRIS' supportive contacts in the BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat. In the same way as last year's report, we have only done such a text search for the months of March and April. From previous experiences, we know that we obtain a good perception of how the IT-related contacts look for the entire year even with this limited material.

In addition, a text search has been done of all main submissions made to the Discussion Forum during the entire year for 2009.

The aforementioned text searches entailed BRIS searching for 102 IT-related words, abbreviations or terms⁴ among e-mail responses, chat logs and main submissions. All texts that resulted in hits were read and coded by content.

A number of hits were sifted out as mismatches, for example the search word "wow" (abbreviation for World of Warcraft) resulted in hits on the exclamation "Wow!".

Several more hits were sifted out because they were considered to be of exceedingly marginal significance to contribute to greater knowledge of the young Internet, for example, a child might in passing explain that it was his or her "second e-mail to BRIS".

A categorisation was done on the rest of the hits based on whether the contact proved to concern one or more of the following topics: *Love and friend relationships*, *Sexually related*, *Poor mental health*, *Humiliation and threats*, *Handling and use of IT*, *Parents' IT* and *Other*. Moreover, it was noted whether the contact concerned one or more of the following overall themes: *Ties to violence IRL*⁵, *Pictures and videos*, *Anonymity/distance* and *Security and protection*. Lastly, it was noted if the contact expressly described the presence or absence of parents or other adults with regard to the IT-related aspect. For every hit, it was also noted whether it concerned a computer and/or mobile phone.

In addition to the results from the categorisations and coding, results are also presented that are based on BRIS' general documentation, such as age and gender.

Overall results

4 adda (add somebody as a friend in a community), användarnamn (username), apberget (community website), backup, back-up, bilddagboken (community website), blip (community website), blocka (block somebody from contact in a community), blocket (trading website), blog, bredband (broadband), =cam, chat (not in chat-logs), community, counter, cyber, data, dator (computer), digital, diskussionsforum (discussion forum), dreamhack, "e-", email, emejl (e-mail), eniro, facebook, fildel (file share), flashback, =flickr, forum, =gb, gmail, googl, groom, gästbok (guest book), habbo (community website), "helgon.net" (community website), hemsid (homepage), hotmail, hårddisk (harddrive), internet, iphone, =irl, kenza (blog), klotterplank (scribble board), kontaktlista (contact list), kp, krypin (nook) "ladda ner" (download), =lan, lana, level, logga, lunar (community website), lösenord (password), "mac", mail, meddelande, mejl (mail), melj (mail), mess (SMS), mms, mobil, mp3, msn, myspace, nätet (the Net), online, on-line, pc, photoshop, playahead, poker, popup, pop-up, porrsid (porn site), "pro ana" (community website), sajtt (site), server, =Sims, site, skype, sms, "snuggast.se" (community website), spam, spray (community website), stream, surfa, tjatt (chat), tradera (trading site), umo, "ungdomar.se" (community website), uppkoppl (connect), usb, web, Wiki, windows, "world of warcraft", wow, www, youtube

The BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat

This text search was done of all supportive child contacts in the BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat in March and April 2009⁶. In total, this involved 1,694 contacts. The text search resulted in 596 hits. After sifting out mismatches and the hits of excessively marginal significance, 376 contacts remained. This is an increase of 102, or barely 40%, compared with the same months in 2008. This large increase is partially due to the total number of e-mails and chats having increased compared with 2008. However, the proportion of IT-related submissions also increased from approximately 18% to 22%.

The average age among these contacts was 14.3 years, which is approximately the same as last year and somewhat lower than for all supportive child contacts in 2009. The gender distribution was 88% girls and 12% boys, which is a somewhat lower proportion of boys than



5 IRL = In real life, meaning life outside the Internet

6 In last year's report, call descriptions from the Children's Helpline/BRIS 116 111 were also included in the text search. Such a search is no longer possible. BRIS has therefore prepared new results based on the material from 2008, with only the BRIS-mail and the BRIS-chat, and it is these figures that the 2009 results are compared with. At the same time, it is worth noting that the difference did not prove to be particularly large for the 2008 results, between including the Children's Helpline/BRIS 116 111 and not.

last year, and a somewhat lower proportion of boys compared with all supportive child contacts.

The coding showed that 70% of the contacts were noted to be about computers, 18% about mobile phones and 12% about both. Together, 82% concerned computers and 30% concerned mobile phones, which is very similar to the proportion from 2008.

Otherwise, the coding provided the following results:

MAILS AND CHATS

Code	% Mar-Apr 09	% Mar-Apr 08
Handling and use of IT	52%	43%
Love and friend relationships	48%	51%
Poor mental health	9%	15%
Sexually related	8.8%	7.7%
Humiliation, threats, abuse	8.5%	11%
Parents' IT	8.5%	6.6%
Other	3.2%	8.4%
Ties to violence IRL	2.9%	2.9%
Pictures and videos	5.6%	5.1%
Anonymity/distance	13%	11%
Security and protection	7.2%	5.8%
N=	376	274

As can be seen in the table, the differences compared with last year are pretty small. Since the differences were also small last year compared with the year before, this analysis appears to be relatively stable; it appears as if this is how BRIS' IT-related contacts are distributed across various topics, themes and other coding.

There may be a few changes worth mentioning. The decrease in the proportion concerning *Poor mental health* is particularly noteworthy. In this context, it is worth noting that the proportion of BRIS' supportive contacts in general about *Poor mental health* also decreased in 2009.

The strong increase in *Handling and use of IT* may have a natural explanation in redistribution from *Other*; some similar contacts instead ended up under *Other* in the coding last year.

Discussion Forum

This text search was conducted among all published main submissions to the Discussion Forum from the whole year of 2009. In total, this involved 4,700 main submissions. After the same kind of sifting described above, 515 IT-related main submissions remained. Since 2008, the proportion of IT-related main submissions increased from approximately 8.8% to 11%, or an increase of around 25%.

The average age was 14.4 years. The gender distribution was 93% girls and 7% boys, which is a somewhat lower proportion boys than all submissions in 2009 and a somewhat higher proportion of boys than the IT-related main submissions from 2008.

The coding shows that 61% of the main submissions were about computers, 26% about mo-

bile phones and 13% about both. In total, 74% were about computers and 39% about mobile phones. The increase in the proportion about mobile phones is marked compared with 2008.

Otherwise, the coding provided the following results:

BRIS DISCUSSION FORUM

Code	% 2009	% 2008
Love and friend relationships	63%	59%
Handling and use of IT	38%	37%
Humiliation, threats, abuse	8.5%	8.5%
Sexually related	6.4%	7.7%
Poor mental health	3.5%	6.0%
Parents' IT	3.1%	4.1%
Other	1.0%	8.8%
Ties to violence IRL	2.7%	1.4%
Pictures and videos	5.8%	5.5%
Anonymity and distance	11%	6.3%
Security and protection	6.2%	4.9%
N=	515	364

As can be seen in the table, the differences compared with last year are not very large, but some differences are still worth noting. These notable differences are the same for the BRIS-chat and the BRIS-mail, as per above. There has been a marked decrease in the proportion concerning *Poor mental health* and a redistribution from *Other* to *Handling and use of IT*.

Some clear differences can be noted between the Discussion Forum and the BRIS-mail/BRIS-chat. There is a clearly larger proportion about *Love and friend relationships* in the Discussion Forum. However, there is a much smaller proportion about *Poor mental health*, *Sexually related*, *Parents' IT* and *Handling and use of IT*.

Other

In BRIS' ordinary documentation from the support services in 2009, it was noted that 2.4% (519) of all supportive child contacts were about *Computers/Mobile phones/Internet*, which is exactly the same proportion as in 2008. The average age among these contacts was 14.2 years and the gender distribution was 74% girls and 26% boys.

No reading and coding was done of this material this year. From the previous year, some differences can still be noted compared with the rest of the material. Based on these differences, BRIS can confirm that when BRIS employees are just about to note whether a contact concerned *Computers/Mobile phones/Internet* (that it is IT related), this is done to a much greater extent when it concerns *Humiliation, threats and abuse* and *Sexually related*, and to a much smaller extent when it concerns *Poor mental health*, *Parents' IT* and *Love and friend relationships*. In other words, BRIS employees view certain topics as more clearly IT related than others.

Results topic by topic

SOME MAIN THEMES that have come forth are summarised under each topic.

The structure in this results section is largely identical to the previous year because no overall differences about what children have said were able to be noted. Some differences and new experiences were able to be noted, however, and are of course presented.

Examples from the BRIS-mail, the BRIS-chat and the Discussion Forum are entirely collected from 2009.⁷

Love and friend relationships

All contacts that have concerned some aspect of love and friend relationships have been noted here. In general, it is a matter of how the Internet, computers and mobile phones play a role in the actual relationships and the handling of them.

About half of all contacts have been noted to be about friend and love relationships. It is also more common when the young people discuss with each other in the Discussion Forum than in other support services.

The common everyday is a theme that is repeated in many of these contacts. This means that love and friendships most often are handled in such an obvious and everyday manner over the Internet, computers and mobile phones.

Last spring, I began chatting with a Finnish girl in English. A few weeks ago, we began to use our webcams and a few days later we began talking on skype. Since I don't have much of a life, I'm not usually so "close" to girls. We became better and better friends and now I'm sooo in love with her.

Main submission from a 16-year-old boy

have a blog that I update everyday about all kinds of things. He comments there, so it must be a sign that he wants to have contact again, doesn't it? Some times, I can write a post about things I KNOW that he will comment on.

E-mail from a 15-year-old girl

The relative anonymity and distance that prevails on the Internet and through text messaging creates new conditions for friend and love relationships. This may be a question of the fact that they do not meet each other face to face, and the person one meets may be on the other side of the planet.¹

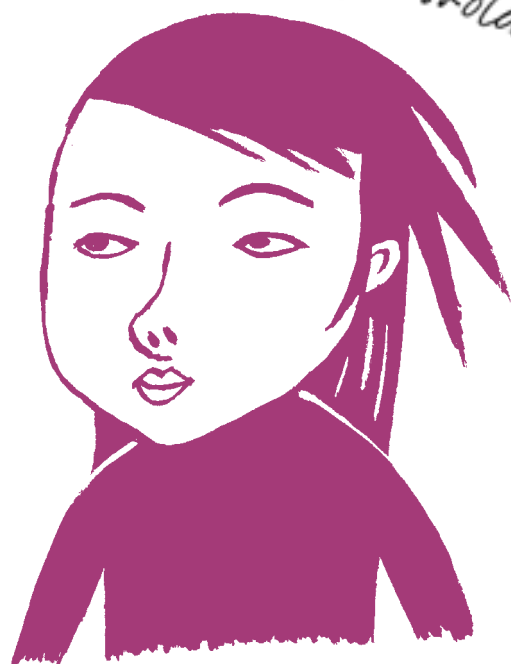
I'm mad about a guy I've chatted with on msn for nearly three years. We live 600 km apart and have never met. We have each other's number and we've used the webcam so I know he's not an old man. I don't want to call, don't like talking on the phone. But I'm afraid, what if he doesn't like me the way I like him, would our "msn relationship" be ruined if that were the case cause I don't want that!

E-mail from a 17-year-old girl

I have no friends that I spend time with outside of school in my new class. That means that my online friends are who I talk to after school and stuff. I like them better and don't have to feel a mess when I talk with them.

E-mail from a 16-year-old girl

*Mina nätkompisar är de jag pratar med efter skolan **



⁷ All examples are authentic, but edited and shortened, as well as redone so that no individual child can be identified.

** My online friends are the ones I talk to after school*

Pictures, videos and webcams in many ways play both an obvious and crucial role in a great deal of what children and young people say when it comes to friend and love relationships. It is clear that they can be both a resource and something that causes problems.

I had sent pictures to my boyfriend with me in a bra and panties and even naked, all cause I want to get compliments from him, but he NEVER says anything about them more than thanks for the pics. and now when I managed to go through his mobile they weren't even saved!!!

E-mail from a 17-year-old girl

last summer i met a guy who was reeeally cute and nice to me. and when we chatted on msn he wanted me to take off my sweater and show myself in a bra and i did it cause he went on about it i know its stupid to do stuff like that but i didn't think about it till i had dun it and now i really regret it!!

E-mail from a 13-year-old girl

On the Discussion Forum, the young people often get support from each other in moving on with the sometimes complex matter of being in love with somebody over the Internet.

Main submission from a 17-year-old girl

I think I'm in love. With a guy I've never met, just chatted with for more than two years. What do you think? Can you fall in love with somebody you've never met?

Response from a 17-year-old girl

I'm also in love with a guy I've never met. It's also real tough, especially since I've lied to him about my age and don't dare tell the truth, which means I can't meet him. You're not alone.

Response from a 16-year-old boy

i'm together with a guy i never met, on msn. haha. we're homosexuals. so of course you can be in love with someone without meeting them. i am. lots of other people are too.

Response from a 14-year-old girl

I think it's ok I'm also in love with a stranger :) although we've exchanged numbers and msn and stuff. It led to us getting together which is a little weird since we've never met and he's only seen pictures of me xD

Handling and use of IT

The contacts that a bit more specifically addressed the handling or use of IT are noted under this heading. It is often about the computer or the mobile phone as an object or about an unusually advanced way of using the Internet.

When I sit at my computer and create, hack, draw, stream, listen, view, read, just about anything, I can disappear. Disappear from time and my family, from all the threats and looks. I can be an avatar in an online game that has to save his princess, I can do something different than... well, life

E-mail from a 15-year-old girl

I gave birth to a little girl on Saturday. Am still at hospital but mum took along a computer. So now I am sitting in the café and writing to you. Oh, can't believe that I'm a mother!:)

Main submission from a 16-year-old girl

When it comes to experiences and questions about the law, technology and security, it is clear that the young people prefer to use the Discussion Forum to get the views and support of their peers. The same is true of experiences of an excessive Internet consumption.

Main submission from an 18-year-old girl

I have a wonderful boyfriend whom I love above all else. but he's obsessed with wow. he wants to play the entire time. and he gets angry that I get angry that he plays. But I want him to be able to show that I can be prioritised sometime over that damned game

Response from a 13-year-old girl

I've gotta say it's real easy to get hooked on wow. I mean I don't think he chooses to play instead of being with you, but rather... it just turns out that way. it's like an addiction.

Response from a 17-year-old girl

Say that you want to leave him if he doesn't pay more attention to you. He shouldn't be able to treat you like that. Then he doesn't deserve you.

Jag har precis
startat en blogg.
Det är något av det bästa
jag gjort! *

* I've just started a blog and it's one of the
best things I've ever done!

then i blocked him right then and took down my
profile picture, and set the settings so that only
people on my contact list can write to me. but
i'm still really scared, is there somewhere you can
check if the person/e-mail address is reported for
anything on the internet?

E-mail from a 15-year-old girl

It is clear how **blogging** has become a part of a
growing number of young people's everyday lives
in recent years. The young people themselves blog
and keep track of each others' and celebrity blogs.

I've just started a blog and it's one of the best
things I've ever done! Even if like nobody reads it,
it helps to unload by writing a little!

Main submission from a 15-year-old girl

is it only me that's bugged by all the blogs about
looks, parties, booze and shit? like all the famous
blogs are just about stuff like that, like kissies,
dessies, kenza, etc. just a load of parties and hair
extensions, make-up, etc...

E-mail from a 16-year-old girl

Humiliation, threats and abuse

Everything that concerns humiliation, threats
and abuse, whether they occurred via IT or have
some other form of connection to IT, are gathered
under this heading.

Nearly one out of ten of BRIS' IT-related child
contacts concerns this topic.

Humiliation on the Internet and by mobile
phone often goes hand in hand with humiliation
in real life. For instance, humiliation often takes
place at the same time both online and in real life.

The relative anonymity and distance also affects
humiliation, which seems to make it easier
to humiliate someone and the instances of humiliation
are becoming increasingly serious. It is
both about not at all knowing the other person
and violating people when not standing face to
face with them.

I want to be able to go out without being nervous
that she and her friends will show up! she recently
posted a text on her picture diary blog and wrote
that she wished me and my mum were hung up
on the cross!

Main submission from an 11-year-old girl

Pictures, videos and webcams are common
tools to humiliate or threaten someone over the
Internet or mobile phones. In barely 20% of the
IT-related humiliation and threat cases, pictures,
videos and webcams have played a crucial role.
They involve receiving humiliating comments
about pictures that the young person posted him
or herself and about pictures others have used in
a humiliating manner.

BRIS: You have really experienced a lot of tough
things, I understand that you are sad.

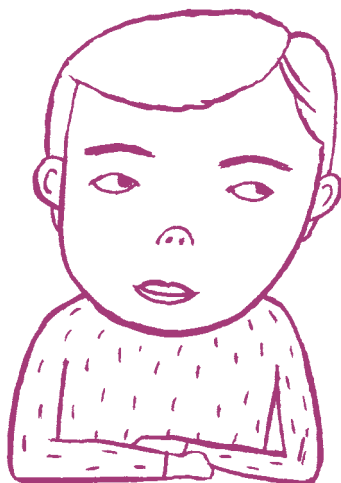
CHILD: and then last winter i met two of erik's friends
one of them filmed with his mobile when we
were going to have sex, although i said no
several times,

CHILD: then he just laughed when i said i wanted him
to delete the videos even though i began to
cry.

CHILD: then when i said that i was going to report
him if he didn't delete them he said that "the
police will just laugh at you if you do just like
everybody else cause you're such a whore"

BRIS: You've really been treated badly and none of
this is your fault.

From a chat with an 18-year-old girl



And once we had the webcam on, i had just showered, and had a towel on. Then i put a shawl around me so he wouldn't see so much. But in school he said that i was a whore who had shown myself on camera :o

E-mail from a 14-year-old girl

Security and protection are important aspects when young people describe their experiences of IT-related humiliation. A lack of security may have led to the actual humiliation, such as the theft of log-in information. The young person may have concerns about how to protect him or herself from humiliation in technical terms. They often choose to get advice on this from their peers on the Discussion Forum.

Main submission from a 14-year-old girl

I've been threatened on msn, it was a 20-year-old guy, I don't dare tell my parents, they would take my computer away, P.S. he said he was going to kill me after school, I was sooo stupid n said what school I go to.

Response from a 17-year-old girl

I don't actually think he'll come, you know that 90% of everyone who says that is lying about showing up, and about their age, it could just as well be 14-year-old guys messing with you. But you should tell your parents anyway.

Response from a 14-year-old girl

Does this guy know what you look like? If not, I don't think you don't actually need to worry.

Response from a 13-year-old girl

I agree with everyone else, report him to the police

Sexually related

Under this topic, BRIS has tried to capture all contacts that are sexually related in some way. Of course, this involves both positive and negative experiences.

General testing is something that is closely tied to sexually related topics. The young people often describe this testing in positive terms, but it is more common that the general testing is linked with some type of trouble.

So there was a guy who was 15 (probably an old man of 55) who began chatting with me and he thought I was "freakin hot" bla bla. He wanted me to show my breasts, and I was so dumb and thought, after all nobody will find out anyway. The next day he was there again and told me to show myself again. I said NO! Then he said he had recorded it and he was going to post it up on the web with my name and everything.

E-mail from a 14-year-old girl

I went in to www.sex.se and clicked the button saying i was more than 18 and there were a lot of girls licking guys on their willies and stuff. Then i saw that it said to download for 18.50 does that mean that i've broken a law and will have to pay 18.50? PLEASE ANSWER!

E-mail from a 10-year-old girl

Heard that there was a clip of when two classmates were stripping on youtube. Now i've reported the films and they've been removed and the account is closed... It was about films where they danced in just their bras & panties... They're only 12/13 years old...

E-mail from a 12-year-old girl

När vi snackar på MSN
så vill han att jag
skulle ta av mej till bh.
Nu ångrar jag mej
skitmycket!

* When we chatted on msn he wanted me to show myself in a bra. Now I really regret it!!

Pictures, videos and webcams are involved in about one fifth of the contacts that are sexually related. They usually contact BRIS about this when it has become a problem, such as the young person having once chosen to send or publish pictures, but the pictures then being used in a way they did not intend.

There was a guy on msn who said that if he got to see me in my underwear i'd get 700 crowns, i was foolish enough to go along with it. It makes me sick. I feel so used and i can't understand that i agreed to do it.

E-mail from a 17-year-old girl

I was texting with a guy and all of the sudden he sent a picture of his penis. My question is: Can I report him if I have photo evidence and a text where I tell him it was wrong?

E-mail from a 15-year-old girl

Humiliation, threats and abuse are described in some of the sexually related contacts. Humiliation most often takes place between young people, and only over the Internet and mobile phones. For some young people this becomes a real problem, others can just shake it off.

Fun that a guy wrote that he wanted to sleep with me on msn just now...woohoo, I can get sex even if I'm single and was recently dumped, PARTY TIME! Um, no now I'm not going to just sit here and fool around.

E-mail from a 16-year-old girl



On the Discussion Forum, it becomes clear how some share experiences like these, and others have never experienced it.

Main submission from a 12-year-old girl

There are loads of different kinds of perverts that add me every day. Of course I block them. I want to talk with somebody for real ? It's such a damned downer every time I log in to msn. Makes me sick that there's so many guys and girls that are super cool at first but then it's like the girls are bi and the guys are total perverts.

Response from a 15-year-old girl*

I know it's so gross!!! I also have loads like that on msn! There're always disgusting people who add me! And first they're cool then it's like are you wet? Yeah right!

Response from a 15-year-old girl

Ugh. I've never had anyone like that add me on msn or anything, but it happens to my friends a lot. The worst is that they sit and laugh, go along with writing something dirty etc. etc. It ends up with them just having dirty old men on their contact lists begging for cam sex.

When it comes to grooming - adults that contact young people for sexual purposes - some children describe it in BRIS' contacts. How many are involved is difficult to say. This is very dependent on how one interprets what the children say. For example, the age of the man/boy is often unknown. In other cases, the age difference is relatively small. A sexual contact in real life, with an adult male the young person got to know through IT, was described in a handful of contacts in 2009.

Jag har en kompis
över internet.
Hon mår inte bra.*

* I have a friend online. She doesn't feel good.

Poor mental health

This involves contacts where children and young people have described how they use the Internet in particular to either handle their own poor mental health or support others who are doing poorly.

The relative anonymity and distance can be seen to be of clear significance in terms of mental illness. Many say that they can only describe how they feel through the keyboard and the Internet, but the anonymity and distance also create problems.

I have a friend online. I found out she doesn't feel good when she sent me an autobiography. And the thought that I can't help her makes me cry. She is planning on running away this summer and if that does not help, she's going to kill herself.

E-mail from a 16-year-old girl

I have had a lot of suicidal thoughts lately and, yesterday, it went so far that I sat and read a suicide guide on the Internet...

E-mail from a 15-year-old boy

In the break-in they took my laptop, my mobile. That was my life. I had a diary that saved me there. I had saved all the BRIS submissions I had written that were supposed to remind me to live life, not bother about all the bad. And on the mobile, my psychologist wrote various texts that I would always look at when I was down.

Main submission from a 15-year-old girl

I almost have nobody to turn to. And I prefer not to be able to see the person I'm talking with. I blog about my feelings instead and that way I've found people who care about me.

E-mail from a 14-year-old girl

In this context, one can also note that the young people very much prefer to use BRIS' web-based support services rather than the phone to talk about and get support concerning poor mental health.

Parents' IT

A number of contacts were about the parents' use of IT having given rise to concerns with the young person in various ways.

Most of these contacts were about the **parents' own use of IT**.

I borrowed dad's mobile and was going to take some pictures. When I was looking for the picture, I saw some pictures that looked strange. When I looked closer, I saw that they were pictures of penises, my little sister naked and a lot more...

E-mail from a 13-year-old girl

i found out that my mum is cheating on my dad!! she's on some dating website and keeps getting strange texts, and when i ask who sent them she says: nobody you know!!!

E-mail from a 13-year-old girl

The parent's excessive time on the computer

Is another theme described by the children as a source of concern.

Main submission from a 14-year-old girl

My mum plays wow... that's all she does! She just sits there and stares into the computer screen and plays... she doesn't listen... she doesn't care...

Response from a 15-year-old girl

go to your mum and say exactly what you want to say at once. and ask, if she thinks its more fun to sit with wow all day instead of spending time with you. that might give her something to think about.

Response from a 13-year-old girl

damn i understand you :) my mum played wow for 3 years and my brother and sister were 1 so i had to feed them, dress them, put them to bed and all that crap! i live in a foster home now, and my mum has stopped playing with the help of social services. maybe that's what your mum should do?

The parent's and the young person's contact with each other by IT

is also something that is described in BRIS' contacts and is often described as not being entirely easy to handle in a good way, for both the child and the parent. At the same time, it is clear that the Internet and the mobile phone can be a resource for the young people in their contact with a parent who they do not live with.

Adult presence

First, it is worth noting that adults are very rarely even mentioned in the young people's IT-related contacts with BRIS, whether in positive or negative terms.

In the majority of cases where parents are mentioned, it is in a negative sense. For example, the young person is unhappy about how the parent acted or that the young person is afraid to tell the parent about what is happening on the Internet. It is particularly common that the young people are afraid of what their parents will say about their plans to meet somebody they met on the Internet.

like a guy. now my parents won't let me chat with anyone or meet anyone from the internet. So what can I do with him?

Main submission from a 16-year-old girl

Main submission from a 16-year-old girl

Have your parents come and asked for your log-ins for e-mail and all that? My mum made me loads of times, but I've always told her no. Cause I think that even if she's supposed to be taking care of me, I do have to have private things.

Response from a 15-year-old girl

if your mum says that she wants your log-ins for your private things, tell her you want her log-in. It is your life, and even if she's doing it cause she cares about you, you need your privacy.

Response from a 14-year-old girl

understand you, but i want a mum like that. my parents don't care about me. so be happy that your mum looks after you so you don't end up in shit! have loads of internet problems now, cause no one at home cares about me.

Conflicts also often arise around the actual use of the computer. Sometimes, the young people say that it is as if the parents use the access to IT as a means of power.

Soon I won't have access to the internet anymore cause mum "punishes" me that way and that means no more bris. Hate her so damned much!

Main submission from a 15-year-old girl

With regard to adults besides the parents, the descriptions are not quite as negative.

BRIS assesses that a growing number of young people say that they have contact with adult professionals by text messaging or e-mail.

Others describe a clear need for such regular contact, but also for direct support, help and treatment by IT. This need is also confirmed by how diligent children and young people are about using the possibility of getting web-based support and advice from an adult at BRIS, in often very serious and difficult topics.

CHILD: *so i wrote an e-mail to my teacher, then he talked a while with me*

BRIS: *Ok, that's good*

CHILD: *after that we e-mailed each other sometimes, when i didn't feel good i e-mailed. But he has so much to do that he doesn't have time to write*

BRIS: *If he is the only one you can talk with I think you should continue to e-mail him and explain how it feels.*

CHILD: *But writing him won't work, I wrote him an e-mail this past autumn but he didn't answer...*

Chat with a 14-year-old girl

Then Anna (the social worker) called again and talked with me and then said that she would call me the next day and ask how things were. She did too, by texting, then she also asked if I wanted to meet her one more time before she met me and my parents. I said that I wanted to.

E-mail from a 16-year-old girl

Discussion



The first year that BRIS compiled a specific report about the IT-related contacts in BRIS' support services was 2007. In terms of issues concerning the Internet, computers and mobile phones, three years is a long time and a great deal has happened. In this year's Discussion section, BRIS bases the discussion on what has been discussed in the previous reports and how one can view these discussions based on current experiences, results and references.

FIRST, ONE CAN QUESTION whether BRIS should compile such a report at all; that BRIS tries to make a summary of and discuss the everyday lives of young people on the Internet and with mobile phones. In many ways, it has become increasingly more unreasonable to try to distinguish the day-to-day on the Internet, computers and mobile phones from the rest of everyday life in recent years. These different parts of everyday activities constantly mix together and are deeply intertwined, especially for young people. In short – the Internet, computers and mobile phones are the day-to-day; they are arenas and tools among many others, where everyday life is involved and is managed. However, it is in this very aspect, the common everyday, that a part of the reason lies for BRIS to nonetheless choose to issue this report year after year.

Important adult presence

For BRIS, an important objective in recent years has been to get parents and other important adults around children to understand just how significantly everyday everything IT related is for children and young people. BRIS' contacts with children and young people show how absent important adults are with regard to young people's everyday lives with the Internet, computers and mobile phones. In the young people's descriptions, adults are barely mentioned at all, and when they are mentioned, it is often in the form of concern for adults' reactions. For BRIS, it is clear that if adults around the young people are to be able to be as important as they should be, they must increase their knowledge of the young Internet. The best way to increase this knowledge is probably to indicate curiosity and talk with the young people about this part of their daily lives. One may even find things to do together with the young people on the Internet and with the computer. At the same time, it is important that this pre-

sence does not become excessive. The adult must always take consideration of the young people's integrity and self-determination.

Many adults ask for simple tips and advice concerning how they should act towards their children with regard to the Internet. The answer is that there are no simple tips. However, if one still wants some inspiration, BRIS thinks that one can look at two slightly different such "tips manuals". One is the Swedish Media Council's *Tio tips till föräldrar om Internet* (*Ten tips to parents about the Internet*) and the other is researcher Elza Dunkel's *Råd till vuxna* (*Advice to adults*). They differ somewhat, making it interesting to study both.

Another way of being present is to be accessible on the Internet and by text messaging as an adult. Many young people describe how contact with a parent far away has been made easier with the Internet. Many young people also describe the need for professional adults to be more accessible over the Internet and by text messaging. This may apply to teachers, social workers, counsellors and psychologists, for example. In the contacts from 2009, it turns out that more professional adults actually are increasingly available over the Internet and by text messaging. However, the young people's need for professional adults on the Internet is still far greater than the supply.

Humiliation in a no-man's land

For schools, the matter of being present and acting in terms of students' daily lives on the Internet and with mobile phones is a difficult and complex issue. This is particularly true with regard to humiliation and bullying. For BRIS, it is clear that many schools take this seriously, but at the same time may be somewhat bewildered. Many children tell BRIS that they have been subjected to threats and humiliation over the Internet and by mobile phone by other child-

ren at their school, but that the school's actions have not been enough. Underlying this may be the fact that these violations take place as if in a no-man's land; not really at home, in their free time or at school. This no-man's land demands an even greater measure of cooperation, particularly between home and school, than otherwise. If this is not achieved, responsibility can easily be shifted from one to the other without anyone seriously taking any action. The Office of the Children and School Pupils Ombudsman (BEO) is clear that the school may never deny its responsibility when humiliation has taken place between students from the same school. The school is obliged to act with the same force as in all other cases of humiliation⁸.

BRIS is aware that the school is charged with a task that is not entirely easy in this case. Although the same action plans can be used as in all other cases of violation in school, the Internet and mobile phones nonetheless entail new conditions, about which constantly new knowledge is needed.

On the website ungaochinternet.se (young people and the Internet), material is available that can be used, particularly by schools, in the work on handling various issues and problems concerning the Internet and mobile phones. The material is based on a number of cases that discussions can be based on. BRIS is cooperating with the website in the preparation of the material.

An explosion of pictures and videos

In recent years, the significance of private pictures and videos on the Internet and in mobile phones has virtually exploded. One example of this explosion is the fact that the website bilddagboken.se (the picture diary) rapidly became one of the most popular websites for children and young people in 2007-2008. Since then, this site in particular has shown up in quite a few of BRIS' contacts with children and young people. Especially as a part of regular daily life, where pictures, videos and webcams are used as a way of showing who one is and of getting to know each other. However, many provide examples of the handling of pictures, videos and webcams leading to problems and serious humiliation. The fact that pictures and videos have become so much more important is, of course, due to their entering the mobile phone. As a result of this, it is now incredibly far easier to both take and spread pictures and videos.

⁸ For more information on the BEO's view of this, refer to <http://www.skolinspektionen.se/en/BEO/English-Engelska/About-BEO/>



According to the Swedish Media Council's review of various websites that are popular among children and young people, billdagboken.se is a site with high ambitions and good results in terms of quality and security in light of the large number of visitors. This shows that the website is at least trying to accept the responsibility that such a broad handling of pictures and videos among children and young people requires.

At the same time, the Swedish Media Council's review and BRIS' experience shows that a great deal remains to be desired, both from the website and others.

Testing sex on the Internet

Pictures, videos and webcams also are of central importance in the changes that the Internet and mobile phones have entailed for sexual and love relationships. In BRIS' contacts, it is common that the young people describe different experiences on how they used the Internet and mobile phone for an often pretty everyday testing concerning sex and love. BRIS' own Discussion Forum has also provided much evidence of how gladly children and young people use the Internet to ask questions and share experiences concerning sex and love.

The combination of the Internet and sexuality is perhaps an area in which young people and adults stand the furthest apart. Many young people use the Internet for their sexual and love relationships in a way that most adults would never dream of. Being a present and responsible adult in matters concerning this topic can therefore be extra difficult. It is probably most important to remain calm and not overreact, and instead help to build up a good atmosphere for discussions on what happens on the Internet and with the mobile phone, even when it concerns love and sex.

Of course, this is extra important when the young person has really been subjected to serious offence or abuse, because the step to telling will be so much shorter if there is already a good conversational atmosphere. In addition, the adult naturally has a responsibility for the safety of the young person. The younger the child is, the more important it is to talk about how one best can protect oneself from getting hurt.

The humiliation and abuse that may worry adults the most is the risk that the young person will fall victim to an adult who tries to illicit sexual contact, so-called grooming. This can be a hard blow to the young person, and must therefore be taken with the utmost gravity. It is very difficult to say how many contacts in BRIS' supportive services were about this. What BRIS can say with

certainty is that there were only a handful of contacts in 2009 where the young person described having sexual contact with an adult in real life following contact over the Internet. In many more contacts, the child described how somebody who could be an adult had chatted or e-mailed about sex with them, but it is impossible to say if it is a matter of 25 or 200 contacts during the year. This uncertainty is due, for instance, to the age of the man or boy involved most often being unknown. The contact could just as well be with a person of the same age.

It is worth noting that experiences from both BRIS and others shows that the young people who mainly fall victim to serious abuse rooted in grooming are those who have already been victimised in other ways and have lacked adequate adult support.⁹

In terms of sexual abuse of young people, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs has been charged by the Government since 2009 to prevent sexual abuse of young people on the Internet. Material has been prepared and training programmes have been arranged, in cooperation with BRIS, among others.¹⁰

A relative anonymity and distance

In several of the reports over the years, BRIS has discussed the relative anonymity and distance that prevails on the Internet and mobile phones. This is a theme that affects many parts of this everyday life.

What it concerns is that the Internet and mobile phones create new conditions in the form of this relative anonymity and distance. Such new conditions entail both risks and opportunities.

Firstly, the anonymity involves one often not at all being sure who one has contact with. In our contacts with young people, many say that both they themselves and others use this kind of anonymity for a pretty harmless and creative testing. However, the same opportunity for anonymity also makes space for humiliation and abuse. A friend may pretend to be another friend to joke around in an offensive manner. Or an adult man may claim to be somebody else in order to illicit trust and further contact.

Although, even when one knows who the other person is, the relative anonymity or distance creates new conditions. In the young people's descriptions to BRIS, it is clear how much simpler it can be to make contact with

somebody one likes and tell him or her what one feels on MSN or by text messaging, for instance, than face to face. Many young people also describe how the Internet creates conditions for being so much more frank about their thoughts and feelings. It is clear how some young people can be lonely and withdrawn in real life, but with the anonymity and distance of the Internet, they can be outspoken and have many friends.

This outspokenness also has a downside in the form of humiliation and threats. It seems so much easier to write something mean about somebody on a blog or as a comment to a picture, or shoot off a death threat in a text message, than doing the same thing face to face.

Another kind of outspokenness or emancipation applies to pictures, videos and webcams. Showing oneself is a way of getting closer to each other, getting to know one another and also a way of having sexual contact. It entails incredible possibilities, but also the risk of being victimised.

It is important for the young person to have the possibility of discussing matters of where one's limits should go in this emancipation together with wise and experienced adults. With this, a young person is better prepared for the moment when, for example, in the midst of the confusion of infatuation, he or she is just about to send off that scantily clad picture. Hopefully, he or she then has the possibility of reflecting for a minute, and thereby making a more level-headed decision.

Internet best for poor mental health

Early on, BRIS confirmed that there seems to be something about the Internet that means that young people gladly use this possibility to handle their or other's poor mental health. A relatively large part of the IT-related contacts concern poor mental health. Moreover, it is much more common for young people to use BRIS' web-based support services (the BRIS-chat and the BRIS-mail) to ask questions about and discuss mental illness, compared with the phone.

BRIS has two potential explanations for what this may be due to.

Firstly, it seems to generally be the case that the young people who have psychological problems are to a greater extent the types of people who like to write, to put their own thoughts and feelings in print, both for themselves and in communication with others. Secondly, it appears as if young people who are doing poorly in a psychological sense prefer to avoid meeting face to face or by phone. It seems to be more suitable to have contact with other people solely through the computer. Then

9 The documentary book Alexandramannen (The Alexandra Man) by the journalist Katia Wagner is a book that provides a detailed illustration of how already victimised young girls are also at risk of being the victims of grooming.

10 For more information, see http://www.ungdomsstyrelsen.se/english_main/

there are, for instance, no running tears or lump in the throat that can get in the way of talking.

When young people intend to deal with their mental illness over the Internet, it is largely only their peers who are on hand. In terms of mental illness, the adult presence on the Internet is mainly a matter of conveying information. There are few opportunities for interaction, personal support or help are particularly rare.

Child and youth psychiatric services in Stockholm County have two websites that have slightly different ambitions of improving the possibilities for young people to obtain support and help on the Internet. Bup.se is a purely informational website, but very good and clear. Bup.nu is directly addressed to young people, and has several interactive possibilities. However, young people do not have the possibility of having their own personal contact there either.

Tjezon (the girl zone) is, however, an example of a place that currently offers personal contact. Tjezon is an NGO that operates chat services where adult women meet girls in more or less serious conversations. BRIS has a continuous contact with Tjezon in their work to develop their chat service.¹¹

BRIS' web-based development

BRIS' support services on the Internet have also been developed and have changed somewhat radically in the past few years. When the first report came out in 2007, the BRIS-chat was barely a thought, and now, it is open four days a week and is the service within BRIS that is growing the most. In 2007, the Discussion Forum had barely 15,000 published submissions compared with 30,000 in 2009. The Source of Joy became an entirely new little service in 2007.

Over these years, BRIS has had time to test and then chosen to discontinue services such as the Red Pages and Squill.

Now, during the spring of 2010, Barnperspektivet.se was launched as BRIS' support for adults about children on the Internet.

BRIS can promise that the development and changes of the website and the web-based support services will continue moving forward. Some services may be discontinued and others may be added. For example, BRIS believes that group chats with children may be an interesting way of developing BRIS' support for young people. However, if, when and how such a service will become a reality is not yet clear.

11 www.tjezon.se

Summary

The report *The Children, BRIS and IT 2010* is the fourth annual report included in the EU-financed project "The Young Internet". This project is being run by the Swedish Media Council in cooperation with BRIS.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT is to increase knowledge among adults about children's and young people's everyday lives with the Internet, computers and mobile phones.

In its web-based support services (the BRIS-mail, the BRIS-chat and the BRIS Forum), BRIS had more than 40,000 contacts with children and young people in 2009. The report provides examples from the support services and comments on the services from children and young people. In addition to this, BRIS works in many other ways to strengthen children's rights and opportunities, both on BRIS.se and external websites.

The report presents the results of the text searches, readings and coding done of the material from BRIS' supportive child contacts. Text searches were conducted of just over 100 IT-related words, abbreviations and terms. The hits were then read and coded based on a number of topics such as: *Love and friend relationships*, *Humiliation*, *threats and abuse* and *Poor mental health*. Additionally, the contacts were coded further based on certain special themes like *Ties to violence IRL* and *Pictures, videos and webcams*.

BRIS can confirm that the results presented in the reports of recent years also agree well with this year's results. Young people say that the regular, daily handling of friendships and love relationships is what they mainly use the Internet, computers and mobile phones for. Among the problems and worries described, the relative anonymity often plays a central role, just like pictures, videos and webcams.

BRIS has based the Discussion section of the report on a few central themes concerning young people and the Internet that have come to light in previous reports. Reflections are made on these themes based on current experiences, results and references. The headings for these themes are for example: *Humiliation in a no-man's land*, *Testing sex on the Internet* and *Internet best for poor mental health*.

The new experiences BRIS describes in the report in particular are the following: The proportion and number of contacts

concerning the Internet, computers and mobile phones – in BRIS' web-based support services – increased sharply in 2009 compared with the year before.

This year, BRIS noted that more children described having or having had contact with important adults over the Internet or by text messaging. The young people mentioned contacts with, for instance, psychologists, teachers, mentors and social workers. At the same time, it is clear that the young people's need for contact with important adults in this manner is still far greater than the possibilities offered.

The number of supportive contacts with the BRIS-chat more than doubled

“In its web-based support services, BRIS had more than 40,000 contacts with children and young people in 2009

in 2009, while the BRIS-mail declined significantly and the BRIS Forum was roughly unchanged.

The proportion of IT-related contacts concerning mental illness decreased significantly in 2009 compared with the years before.

It is clear how blogs have gained growing significance to young people on the Internet. Children diligently write on their own blogs and keep up to date with those of their peers and celebrities.

Young people occasionally describe for BRIS how somebody who could be an adult chatted with or e-mailed them about sex. However, the extent of this is difficult to comment on because the age of the possible adult is often unclear.

Thomas Jonsland, BRIS
Stockholm, May 2010

BRIS 116 111
(Children's helpline)
116 111

The BRIS-mail,
the BRIS-chat, The BRIS Forum
www.bris.se

BRIS' support website for adults
www.barnperspektivet.se

BRIS Adult Helpline
– about Children
077-150 50 50

Membership
and donations
Pg 90 15 04-1

