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Disruption to NZ's family homes amid excessive internet use

Fresh research reveals teens skip meals and sleep to remain online

Netsafe research has found almost half of Kiwi teenagers have had some conflict with whanau or friends because of time spent using the internet.

New Zealand's online safety organisation conducted the research to investigate excessive internet use amongst young people aged between 13 and 17.

A majority of respondents (47%) said that they had either "very often" (14%) or "sometimes" (33%) experienced conflict with family or friends because of the time spent online.

The impact of internet use on academic success amongst teenagers was also canvassed, and 26% of participants revealed at some point "results at school have dropped because of the time I spent on the internet".

Pacific teens were more likely to experience deteriorated results due to time spent online (19%) compared to Maori (11%) and New Zealand European/Pakeha adolescents (7%).

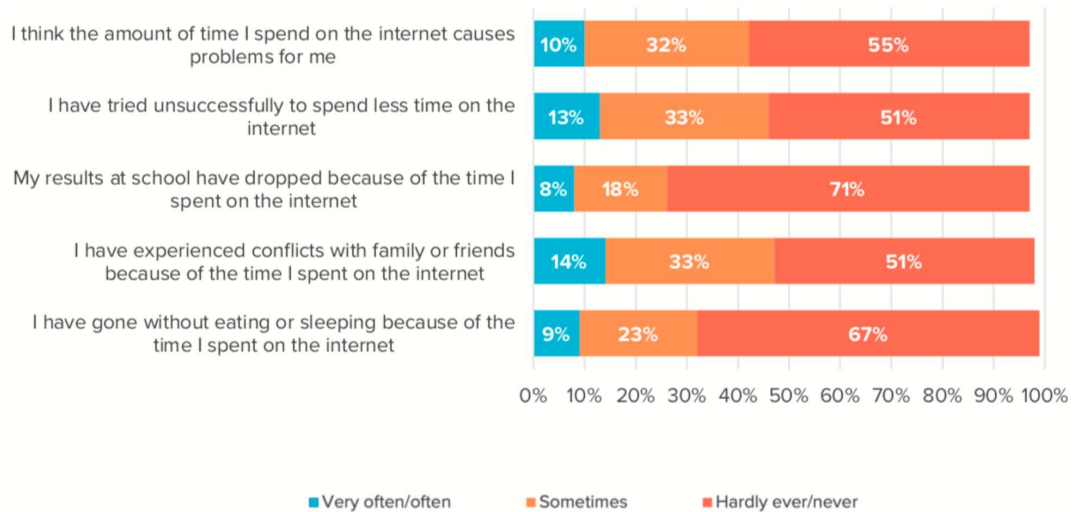
Netsafe chief executive Martin Cocker said the internet connects young people to a world of entertainment, opportunity – and distraction.

"It's important to recognise that not all screen time is created equally. Spending two hours online streaming cartoons isn't as beneficial as spending two hours learning," says Cocker.

"Ultimately parents and caregivers can help by setting boundaries, guidelines and limitations to mitigate the effects of the internet and devices on school work." Parents can establish 'house rules' by having regular and open conversations about what their kids are doing online and understanding what they need.

"We know the internet is an excellent tool to support learning, but even the teenagers surveyed recognised that excessive use can sometimes hinder their academic potential."

Netsafe's research also found 32 percent of teens had gone without sleep and food because of the time spent online, and that 10 percent considered that the amount of time they spend online caused them problems.



This research is part of Netsafe’s second report as a member of the Global Kids Online network.

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About the Ngā taiohi matihiko o Aotearoa – New Zealand Kids Online study

In September 2018, Netsafe, with the support of UNICEF NZ, joined Global Kids Online, an international network of academics, social researchers, and experts dedicated to the study of children’s rights, risks and opportunities in the digital age.

Global Kids Online’s purpose is to generate rigorous cross-national research-based evidence regarding the way children access and use the internet and to understand the risks and opportunities of their interaction with digital tools.

Netsafe will publish more findings from Nga taiohi matihiko o Aotearoa New Zealand Kids Online addressing topics such as children’s’ experiences of online risk and parents efforts to support their child to navigate the online environment.

About Netsafe

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation with an unrelenting focus on online safety. We keep people of all ages safe online by providing free support, advice and education. Visit netsafe.org.nz for useful resources or call 0508 638 723 seven days a week for help with an online incident.