University of Southampton

HARMFUL
SHARENTING
IN THE UK

Briefing for Educators

Sharenting is the practice of parents sharing images, stories, and other information about children, on social media. Schools, relatives, and guardians are also involved in the practice.

The ProTechThem research project brought together social and computer science expertise to investigate the risks of sharenting and identify harm prevention measures.

The project surveyed a representative sample of over 1,000 UK parents and found that current regulations, platform safety provisions, and parental cybersecurity measures do not sufficiently protect affected children from digital harm.

45%

Prevalence:

45% of UK parents practice sharenting

Commonly used platforms:

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube

Harm rates:

1 in 6 parents said that their children had experienced digital harm due to sharenting

Risky practices related to parental reports of digital harm are:

Weak cybersecurity measures devised by parents and frequent sharing.

False sense of security:

Parents overestimated the effectiveness of security settings provided by social media platforms

School risk:

Parents felt that schools were often less careful when sharing information (such as images and stories) of their children online.

Poor cybersecurity awareness:

Parents exhibited insufficient awareness of how social media properties such as the 'share' and 'tag' features enable unauthorised reshares of their posts about their children.

Digital harms affecting children

Identity Fraud

Identity Theft

Harassment

Cyberbullying

Contact by Strangers

Privacy Breaches

Recommendations for Educators

Incorporate sharenting risk awareness into school ICT teaching.

Train teachers and parents on digital harms and privacy rights

Review school online sharing practices to minimise students' exposure to risk.

The following digital resources which are freely available at the ProTechThem project's website (**www.protechthem. org**), are based on the project's findings and can be used to support the above recommended practices:

→ **The Sharenting Risk Awareness Checklist** www.protechthem.org/sharenting-risk-awareness-checklist-srac-coming-soon

→ **The Sharenting Cyber Awareness Video** www.protechthem.org/resources-2

→ **An open source user-friendly digital tool for detecting and deleting risky social media content about children** www.protechthem.org/digital-resources

Resources

If you've found this briefing useful or it has contributed to any changes to your policy and practice, please drop us a line at: protechthem@outlook.com. We greatly value your feedback.

Find out more

ProTechThem: Building Awareness for Safer and Technology-Savvy Sharenting
www.protechthem.org

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