



“Awareness raising on children’s privacy protection”

Online gaming protection: *Will online gaming ever be safe?*

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CODACONS

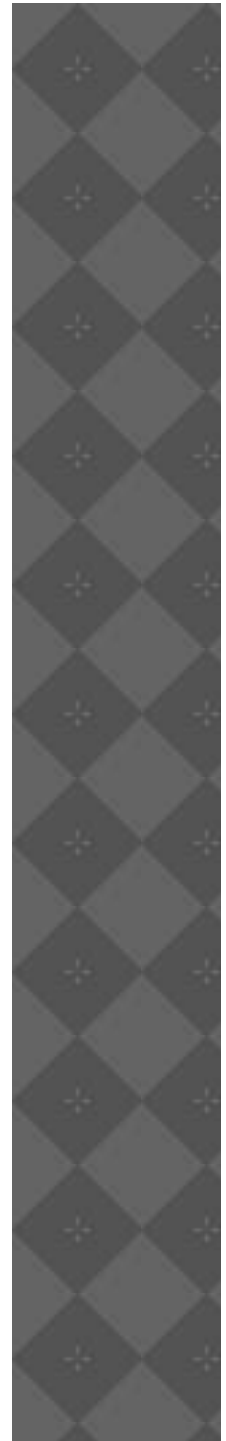
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ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET GROUP NEEDS

The surveys have been designed to identify the needs of the target groups (**young people, parents, teachers and data controllers**), lack of information and knowledge related to the behavior in electronic communication networks and control over one's personal data, risks and gaps related to children privacy protection on the Internet, most recent infringements and violations of privacy online.



Violence, grooming, child abuse, harassment, gambling, fraud, violation of privacy, offence are some of the **main problems that online gaming can cause to a child.**

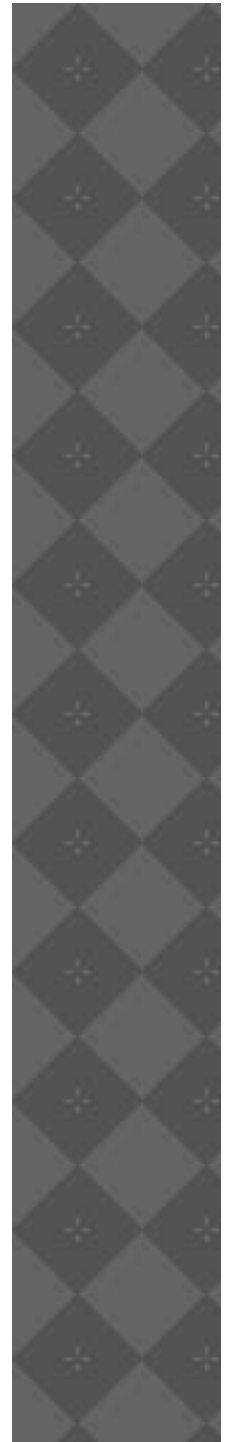
Others could be racism, access to illegal content, to violent-gruesome-hateful content, stalking, meeting strangers, unwelcome persuasion to drugs, self harm and aggressiveness.



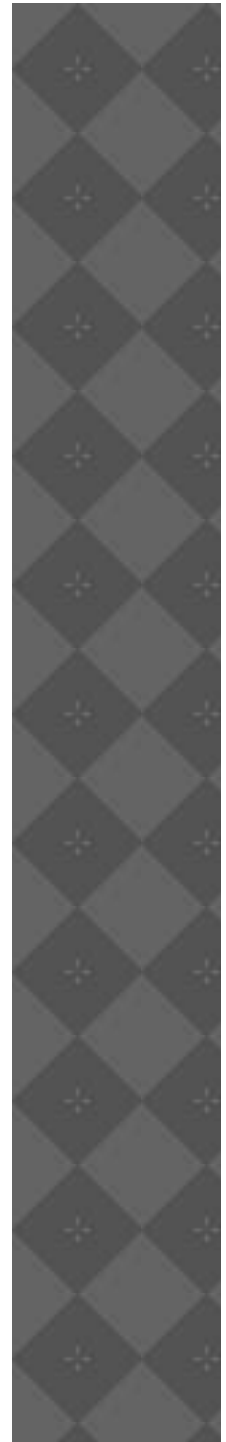
Does the legal framework in Europe protect your children from the inherent dangers of online gaming?

Is there a tool which helps prevent all the unwanted situations that may occur?

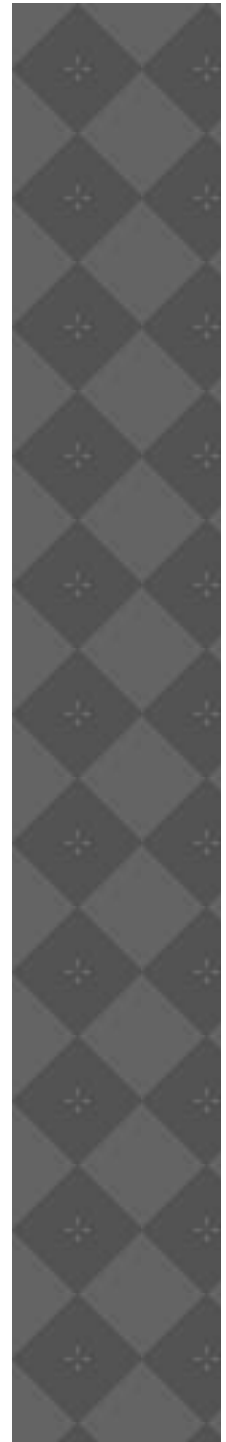
Is there a tool that can locate the offenders and prevent them from continuing doing harm?



The European Union has tried over the past years to fight cyber crime and crimes of children's sexual exploitation, by implementing treaties such as the Council's of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against sexual exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007) and the Convention of Cybercrime.



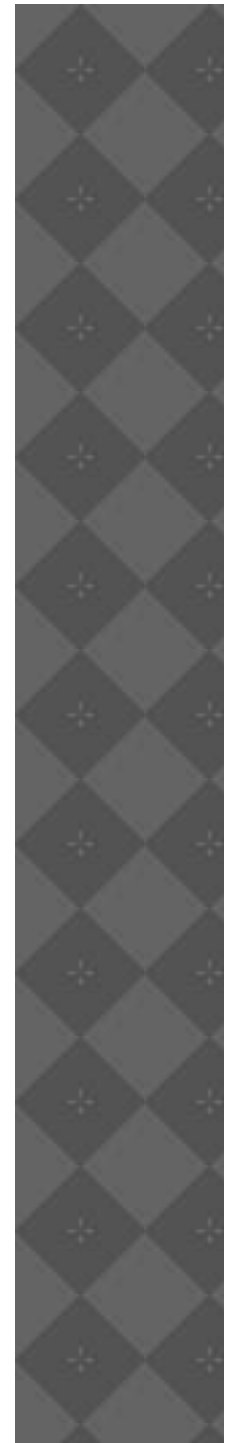
Furthermore, after the growing popularity of online games, especially of the MMORPG (**Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games**) the Safer Internet Program of the European Commission, that aims “*at empowering and protecting children and young people online by awareness raising initiatives and by fighting illegal and harmful online content and conduct*”, has financed projects like PEGI, PEGI online, Sip-bench and Quattro Plus aiming at filtering and labelling the content of online games.



Safer Internet Centres run all over Europe, in order to raise “*awareness regarding online risks amongst children, parents, teachers and carers, offering advice about staying safe online to young people via helplines and providing contact points (hotlines) to report illegal content*”.

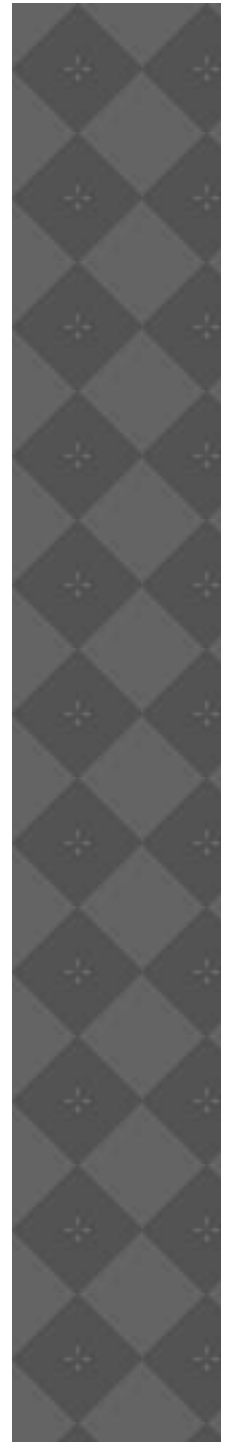


To **fight the illegal content**, projects like CIRCAMP, I-Dash, MAPAP, FIVES, are funded, in order to international law enforcement co-operation, to prove the feasibility of a European database with known child pornography, to measure and analyse the peer to peer activity against paedophile content and to develop a self-contained tools set that will focus on speed and efficient execution to help in police investigations of large amount of data.



But **still many problems remain**, as all these protection tools are still not able to cover all the *subjective problems*, when it comes to the user, and all the *objective problems*.

Internet is a vast ocean of information, and illegal and harmful content is becoming easier to access and can even be found unintentionally.

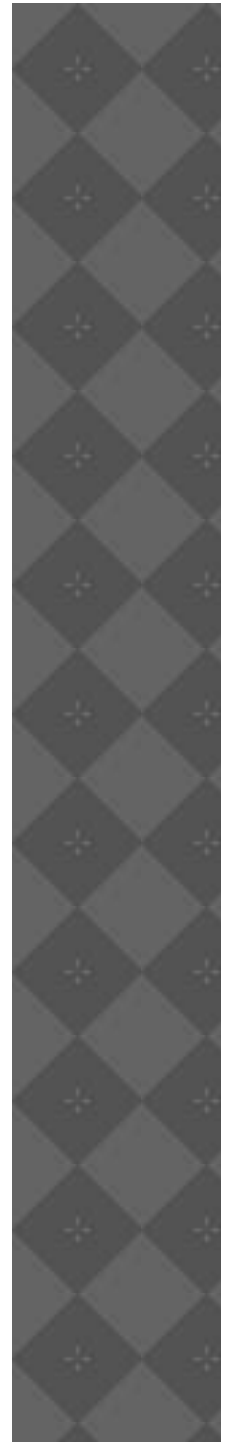


PEGI (Pan European Game Information system) online aims to give young people in Europe improved protection against unsuitable online gaming content and to educate parents on how to ensure safe online play.

But what happens when the parents are not near their children when they access internet and online games?

What happens if a child uses its money to buy a game or uses its parents cards to buy it online?

What happens with the hundreds of online games that are not registered under the PEGI system?



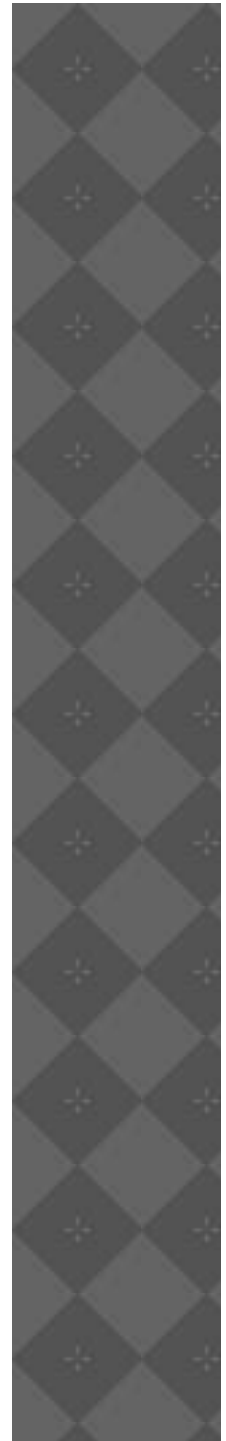
A child, unobserved, can easily fake its id and state a different age in order to be able to access an online game or a website.

How is this controlled? Is there a tool that can identify the child's age?

NO

There is still not such tool.

Children can access all Webpages stating that their age is older than the age limit and expose themselves to unsuitable material.



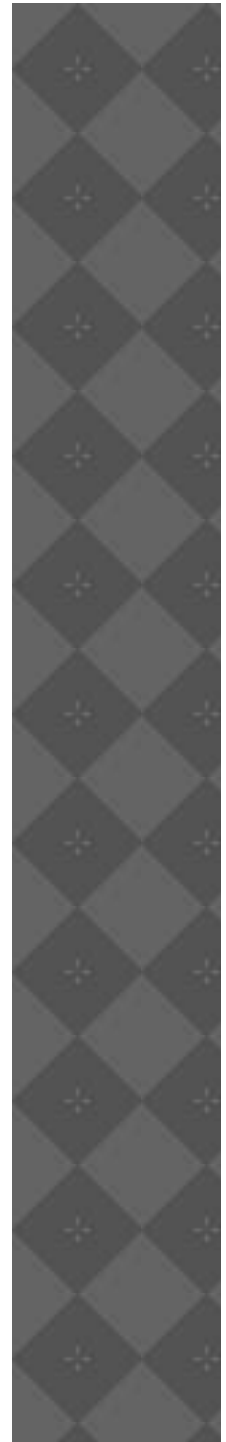
What about *console games that can be played online?*

According to Sip-Bench II:

“All the tested consoles have their own embedded parental control tool but none is able to filter web pages according to the content. The 3 embedded tools are focused on the control of other online activities: chatting with other players, online gaming and content downloading/purchasing (as part of offline activities filtering)”.

So, it is true that the game is suitable for the child's age, but what happens when the child access the internet through this game?

It can still be exposed to unsuitable material.

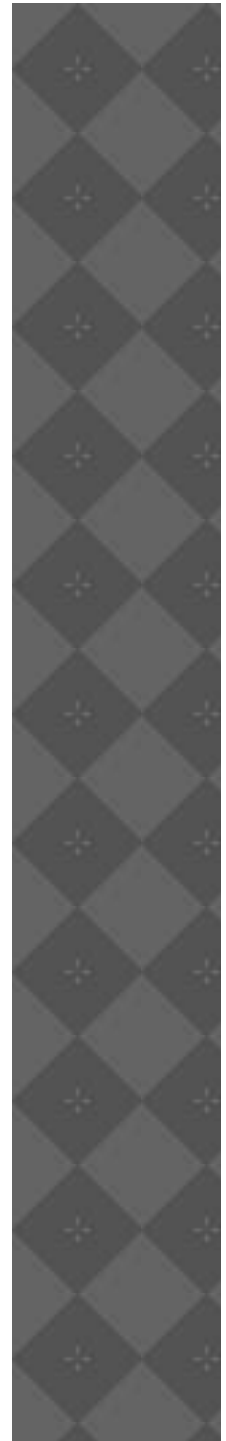


The Safer Internet Centres, which are present in **30 European countries**, are made up of awareness centres, hotlines and, in some countries, of helplines.

But how many of the parents, guardians and teachers are sufficiently informed in order to protect their children?

The only way to provide sufficient awareness would be **teaching online safety in schools**, from as early an age as possible.

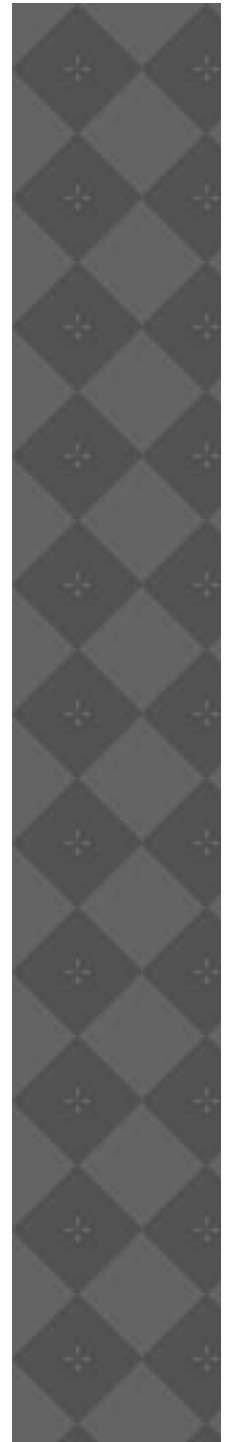
Children should be grown up conscious of the dangers and risks of online exposure and mature to protect themselves against these threats.



As far as fighting the illegal content is concerned, there is still a great problem remaining:

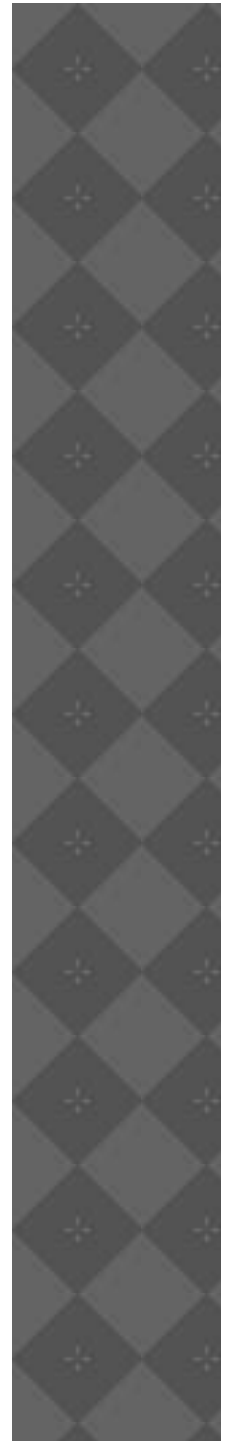
not all children, and especially teenagers, notify to their parents or guardians about their online activities, so is likely possible that **they will not inform about the violations or offences that they suffer.**

That gives to the responsible bodies less possibilities to trace the offender and eliminate such actions.

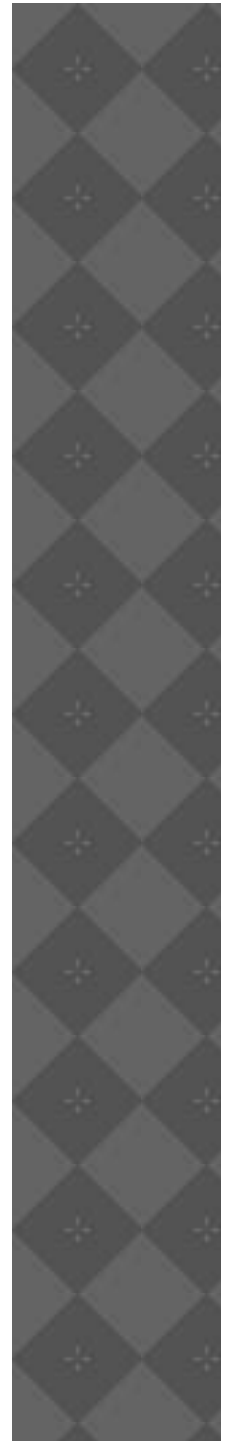


But, in any case, **prevention and precaution are preferred:**

- ü **We need** tools that will guarantee for children the prevention of entering unsuitable websites and be in touch with inappropriate material.
- ü **We need** a greater application of the PEGI Online System, in the majority of online games.



- ü **We need** all children to be informed and aware in full about the dangers of online activities.
- ü **We need** tools to detect the violations, even if not reported.
- ü **We need** bigger effectiveness of the existing safety measures.



***Thank you for
your attention!***

