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# Risks and consequences of adolescents' online self-disclosure

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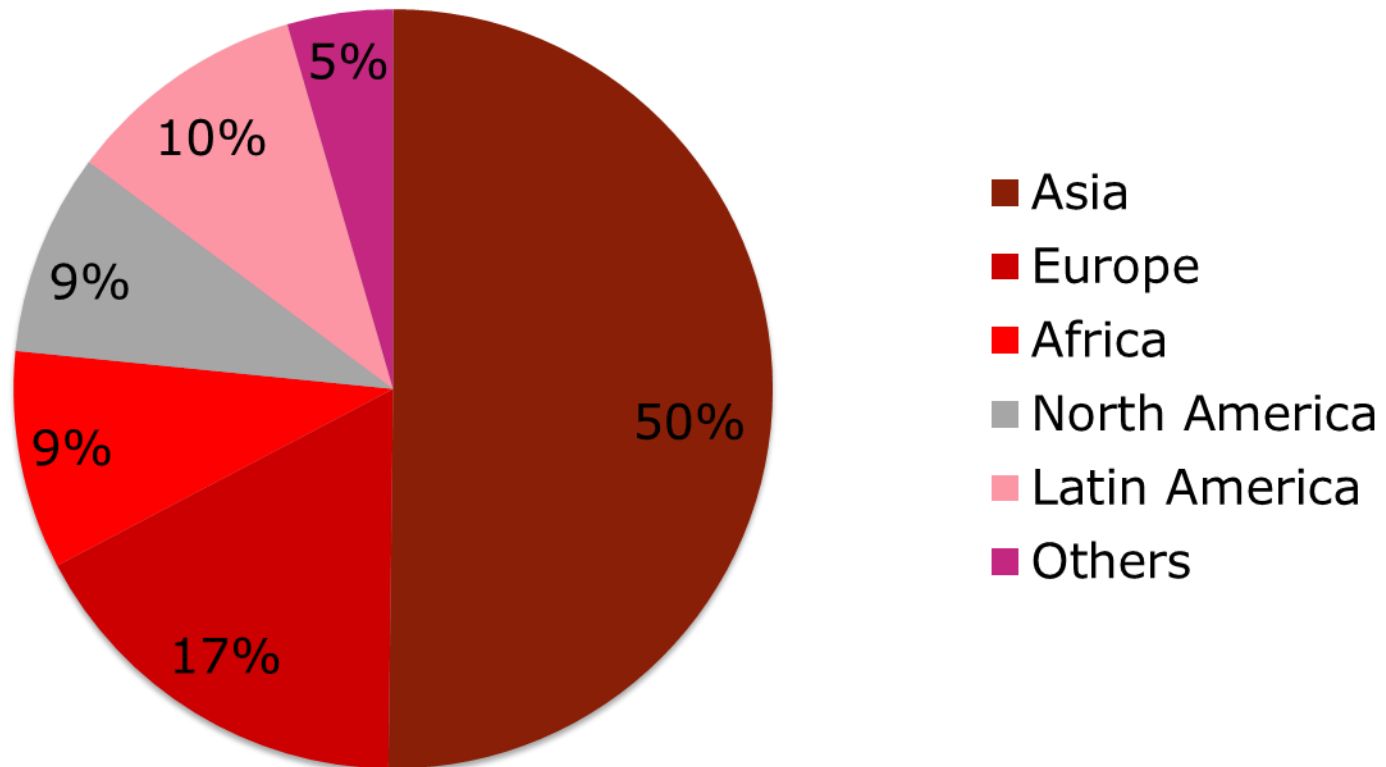
# What is **self-disclosure** on the Internet?

- Self-disclosure on the internet may be defined as a process, when **one person voluntary shares his/her personal information** to others online [7];
- Online self-disclosure can be verbal or non-verbal [1]:
  - verbal disclosure may be explained as sharing personal opinions or thoughts;
  - non-verbal disclosure may be related to sharing photos or videos of oneself.

# Why adolescents? (1)

- Internet World Stats (2017):

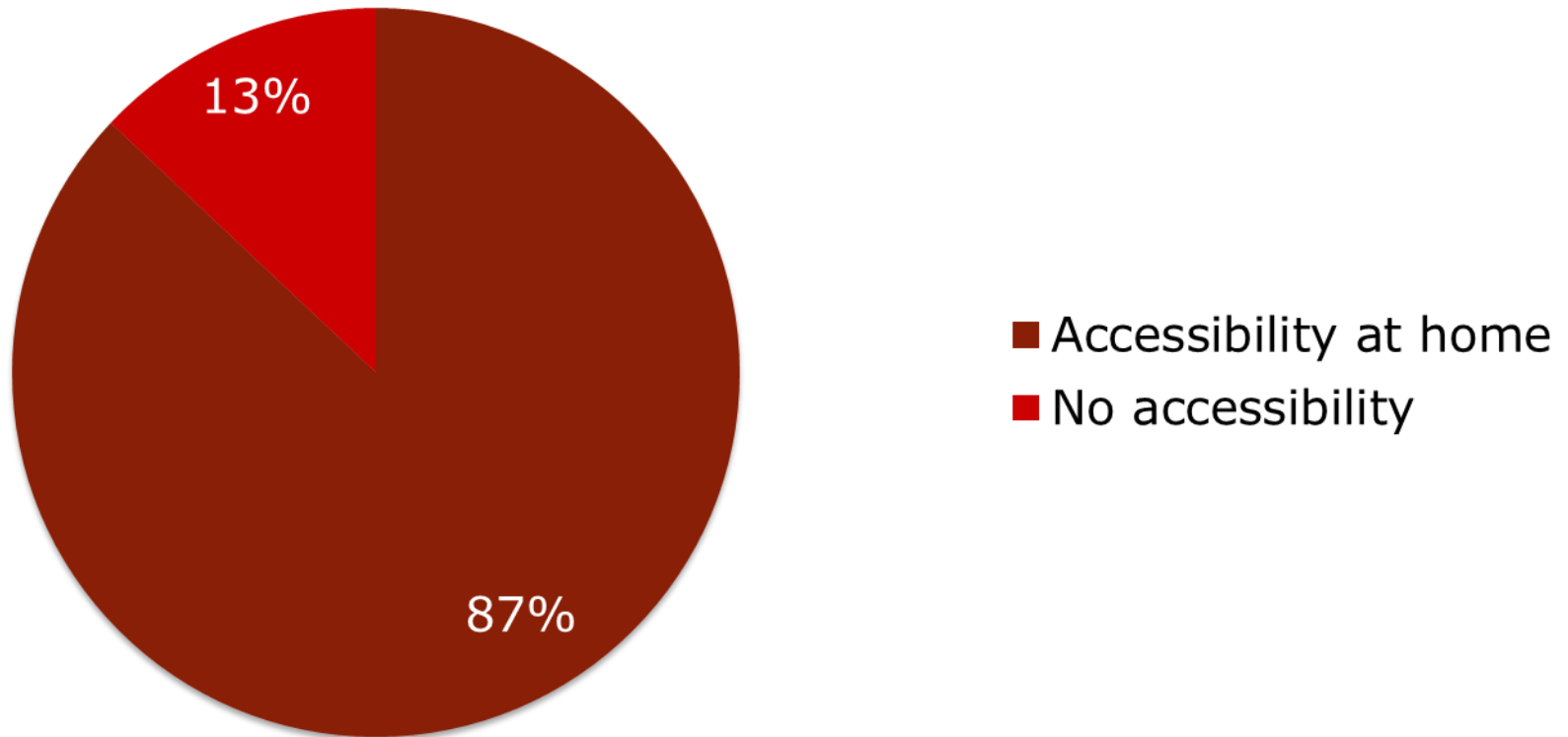
## Percentage of the Internet Users





## Why adolescents? (2)

**Percentage of European Youth**





## Why is it important?

- Mostly **adolescents spend a lot of time on social networking sites** where disclosure occurs [5] [6] [7].
- It is important to mention that **online self-disclosure have negative and positive consequences** [8]:
  - It allows to explore adolescents' identity and to create or maintain relations [4] [7].
  - Is related to risky behaviour [9]: sharing personal information online is a risky behaviour by itself [2] [3] [10].



## Scientific Importance

- The overall risky behaviour on the Internet is widely studied area of today's researchers.
- There is a need to **better understand what kind of self-disclosure online adolescents understand as risky behaviour and what consequences it causes.**
- The scientific knowledge may help us to create and implement possible prevention or intervention programs [3].



# Aim and Research Questions

- The **aim** of this research is to find out what do adolescents think about the risks and consequences of online self-disclosure.
- **Research questions:**
  - How do adolescents understand risky online self-disclosure?
  - What are the consequences of adolescents risky online self-disclosure?





## Method: Procedure

- The research has been conducted in two Lithuanian schools, where **4 focus groups** have been organised (from 2 to 7 adolescents per group).
- Active parents' agreements were collected.
- Participants were informed about the goals of the discussion and its procedure:
  - this discussion will be recorded;
  - the records will be protected by the mentor of the study;
  - collected data will be used anonymously.



## Methods: Measures (1)

- The questions for the discussion groups were chosen according to the aims of the study. These questions were:
  - What is risky online self-disclosure? Give some examples.
  - What are the consequences of risky online self-disclosure? Give some examples.
  - The participants had to answer some demographical questions, including their age and gender.

## Methods: Measures (2)

- In order to find out what do students think about risks and consequences of online self-disclosure, the **qualitative content analysis** of the information from the focus groups was used.
- The recordings of each group were transcribed word by word.
- The main ideas and thoughts of the participants were highlighted in the transcribed text and inductively grouped into the categories and subcategories.

## Methods: Participants

- Twenty one adolescent aged from 11 to 17 years ( $M=13.86$ ,  $SD=2.37$ ) participated in this study.
- Eighteen of them were female and three - male.



# Results: Forms of risky online self-disclosure

Category	Subcategory	Example
Verbal	Disclosing personal information	<...> you disclose your personal data, like where you live, what's your first or second name, your birth date <...>
		<...> sometimes e-mail <...>
		<...> where your parents work <...>
	Sharing personal ideas or opinions	<...> writing blogs. You show others what do you think, disclose your own opinion <....> it can be risky <...>
		<...>someone may use your ideas against you <...> they may try to hurt you <...>
	Building relationships	<...> communicating with people you don't know <...>
<...> well, if I talk on Skype I do it just with my relatives <...> I'm afraid to talk with people I don't know <...>		
Non-verbal	Posting photos	<...> your bank card's account may figure in the shared photo <...>
		<...> they may send your shared photo to somebody who you don't know <...>
		<...>I've seen on Instagram <...> that some people was self-injuring and posting the photos of that <...>
		<...> young schoolgirls were sending their naked photos to older students <...>
	Posting videos	<...> I found one girl who's posting videos of how she self-injures <...>



# Results: Consequences of risky online self-disclosure

Category	Subcategory	Example
Property damage	Robbery	<...> if you post, that you are not home, they may come and rob your house <...> <...> they may find where you live, come and kill you <...>
	Bank account theft	<...> you may accidentally share a photo where your bank account is visible. Thus, somebody may use that against you<...>
Interactional problems	Identity theft	<...> you can create a pseudo profile of yourself <...> the problem is, that you may start thinking that you really are that pseudo person <...>
		<...> for example, you send your photo to somebody <...> and later on you find out that it's a 50 years old man <...> who was using somebody's personal data to look younger <...>
	Communication with strangers	<...> stalking <...> he may have your photos and you don't who is he <...>
		<...> stalkers <...> may start frightening you <...> that they will disclose something about you to others <...>
		<...> you may agree to meet strange in face to face <...>
		<...> he may kidnap, kill or rape you <...>
	Cyberbullying	<...> mocking, telling others lies about you <...>
		<...> somebody may start mocking <...> <...> horrible comments on the posted photos <...>

## Discussion and Conclusion (1)

- This study has shown that risky online self-disclosure can be verbal or non-verbal. These results go along with a main theoretical background of self-disclosure, which states that disclosure can be verbal or non-verbal [1].
- This study has also shown that risky online disclosure may cause property damage or interactional problems. According to Tufekci (2008), these negative consequences of online disclosure is related to poor users' possibility to evaluate what to disclose online.

## Discussion and Conclusion (2)

- The most importantly, this study indicates that adolescents know that online disclosure can be risky and they also can describe some important consequences of such behaviour.
- However, even if they know the risks, they still engage in risky online self-disclosure. Thus, more attention should be paid in educating adolescents about the risks of online self-disclosure.



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