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## ***Editorial Words***

*Dear Distinguished Readers,*

In the realm of academia, where the pursuit of knowledge and the sharing of wisdom take center stage, we are delighted to introduce the second issue of Volume 27 of the ASEJ Scientific Journal. This publication, in partnership with the Bielsko-Biala School of Finance and Law, continues to serve as a repository of intellectual exploration and a testament to the wealth of contemporary research.

Within the pages of this volume, a diverse collection of scholarly articles awaits. Each article represents a facet of our collective commitment to understanding the intricate tapestry of global concerns. From the realm of education to the intricacies of energy security, from the digital landscape to geopolitical intricacies, these articles provide valuable insights and open doors to meaningful discourse.

The essence of this volume lies in its unwavering dedication to furthering our comprehension of complex subjects. These articles, penned by experts and scholars who are leaders in their fields, are a testament to the rigorous examination and exploration of topics that resonate with our ever-evolving world.

As you embark on this intellectual journey through Volume 27, No. 2, we invite you to consider the broader tapestry of knowledge it presents. Each article adds depth and dimension to the ongoing conversations surrounding the most pressing issues of our time. Together, they form a mosaic of thought, offering fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a deeper understanding of the complexities that define our contemporary world.

These articles are more than words on paper; they represent the collective pursuit of wisdom and the desire to share it with our readers. In each piece, you will find the dedication of researchers who have invested their time, expertise, and energy to illuminate the issues at hand.

We encourage you to engage with these articles, to discuss and debate their findings, and to contribute to the ongoing dialogue that drives the pursuit of knowledge. We trust that this volume will not only inform but also inspire, and that the insights it offers will be a valuable addition to your intellectual journey.

The imperative role of risk management in ensuring the security of logistics processes within small service enterprises is illuminated, emphasizing the significance of mitigating risks in this sector. Safety management in the context of ISO 9000 quality management systems is dissected, underscoring the pivotal role of these systems in ensuring the safety and quality of organizations.

We invite you to immerse yourselves in this eclectic collection of scholarly works, each a beacon of knowledge and insight into these crucial subjects. The articles contained within this volume aspire to stimulate discussion, foster a deeper understanding, and inspire further exploration. We trust that the journey through these pages will be an intellectually enriching experience for all our readers.

*Doc. Dr Kateryna Pilova*

*Editor of the ASEJ, Issue 2, Volume 27, 2023.*

# The threat to the safety of children and young people in the digital context

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**Abstract—** In today's world, where children are getting earlier and earlier access to technology and the Internet, there are many risks that can affect their safety. Parents and teachers have a key role in protecting children from these risks through appropriate awareness and preventive measures. This article discusses the risks faced by children and adolescents in a digital context, based on the results of various studies. A number of risks are presented, such as contact with strangers, cyberbullying, inappropriate online content and technology addiction.

**Keywords—** cybersecurity, network, children safety, crimes

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the Internet is an excellent and easily accessible treasury of knowledge. In today's digital world, children and young people are becoming more and more involved in the use of various online technologies and platforms. Yes, this brings many benefits, such as access to knowledge, the ability to communicate and develop digital skills, but at the same time there are a number of risks that can affect the safety and well-being of children. In this age, digital threats are diverse and cover both technological and social aspects. Children are influenced and vulnerable to inappropriate content, fraud, manipulation, cyberbullying, inappropriate contacts and many other threats that can significantly affect emotional health, physical safety and mental development. In order to protect children from these risks, it is essential that parents, carers and teachers understand the likelihood of risks and take appropriate precautions. In order to ensure the child's safety in the digital

world, it is necessary to implement the rules for using the Internet and monitor online activity. Not without significance is education in the area of safe use of technology, as well as building a trusting relationship with the child. Keep in mind that protecting children in the digital world requires the commitment and cooperation of all stakeholders to create a safe and appropriate online environment for the youngest users.

## II. NETWORK USERS

Over time, technology has developed so much that the Internet is now an integral part of our daily lives. This phenomenon applies not only to adults, but also to children at an increasingly younger age. Thanks to modern devices, such as tablets and smartphones, children have almost unlimited access to the Internet - a world full of possibilities, but also full of various threats. It should be noted, however, that it is children who are in the period of shaping their personality that are most exposed to the dangers of unconsciously using the Internet. The data shows that in Poland as many as 89% of children use the Internet, of which 45% of them use the Internet every day or almost every day. In addition, as many as 70% of children aged 7 to 14 regularly play online games (Furmanek, 2014). These numbers testify to the widespread use of the Internet among children and the popularity of online entertainment. Agnieszka Bąk (2015) in the publication *The use of mobile devices by young children* presents the results of quantitative research, which are show that as many as 25% of preschool children use



mobile devices on a daily basis. According to the survey, parents most often indicate watching movies or movies as the main online resource used by children (79%).

Another popular activity is playing games (62%). It is also worth noting that as many as 63% of children play with a smartphone or tablet without a specific purpose. However, it is important to be aware of potential risks, as every fourth child actively uses the Internet, browsing websites (26%) or searching for content such as videos or apps (28%). About 70% of parents who share their mobile devices with their youngest do so to keep them entertained when they have to go about their own business. Every fourth parent admits that they allow their child to use a smartphone or tablet to help them eat a meal. In contrast, 18% of parents surveyed give their children access to mobile devices to help them fall asleep (Bąk, 2015). From an early age, children are exposed to the digital world, which affects their cognitive development, entertainment and interaction. What's more, the age at which children use the Internet independently is constantly decreasing. While a few years ago it was believed that children start their adventure with the Internet at the age of 9-10, now (Polska, 2016) (Lange, Bochenek, Wrońska i Niedzielska-Barczyk, 2018) indicate that children become Internet users at the age of 6-7 years and younger. Children at younger school age often do not realize the consequences that may result from their activities on the Internet. They can be naive and easily influenced, making them easy targets for dangerous people or content. Children may not be aware of the risks of interacting with strangers online, as well as risks such as cyberbullying, sexual abuse and exposure to inappropriate content.

While forming their identity, children are particularly vulnerable to outside influences, including the Internet. The virtual world can influence their perception of themselves, shaping social relations and values. That is why it is so important that children are aware of the risks of using the Internet and have the appropriate support and education to help them recognize these risks and take appropriate action. Parents, guardians and teachers play a key role in keeping children safe in the digital world. They should be responsible for monitoring children's online activity, talking to them about risks and supporting them in developing digital skills. Education about safe use of the Internet, privacy protection rules, recognizing dangerous situations and building healthy online and offline relationships is extremely important. Education is a key element in this field. Parents and teachers should be involved in the conscious and systematic development of digital skills in children, such as safe use of the Internet, recognizing and dealing with dangerous situations. It is also important to provide children with emotional and educational support so that they can properly respond to threats and effectively protect themselves from them.

According to the data of the Central Statistical Office (GUS), an even greater percentage of households with children under 15 have access to the Internet, as much as 99.5%. It can therefore be said that the Internet has become an extremely common medium, accessible to young people from different social classes. Moreover, the same data shows that virtually all

households with children (99%) use high-quality broadband. This gives children the opportunity to benefit from the full potential of the Internet and all available resources. Statistical data agree that young people are the group that uses the Internet most often and intensively. As many as 99.2% of them declare regular use of this type of mobile device. Moreover, compared to older age groups, young people have relatively higher digital competences. This means they have a better ability to use technology and navigate the online world (GUS, 2020).

### III. RISKS RELATED TO SECURITY THREATS RELATED TO THE USE OF A COMPUTER AND THE INTERNET

The safety of using the computer and the Internet is compromised by various factors that can lead to dangerous situations and consequences. In the context of the dynamic development of IT tools, there is a need to be aware of the negative phenomena associated with their use. In particular, teachers and parents should pay attention to the various types of hazards. These include physical hazards, such as the negative impact on vision and posture resulting from prolonged computer use. Another psychological threat is nothing more than addiction to technology and loss of contact with the real world due to excessive concentration on virtual reality. Moral threats, on the other hand, result from easy and uncontrolled access to inappropriate content, such as bomb-making instructions, drugs and pornography. Another type are social threats, such as unethical behavior, anonymity or lack of appropriate restrictions. Intellectual threats, on the other hand, include uncritical trust in the capabilities of machines and the occurrence of "information shock", i.e. an accelerated and overwhelming influx of information (Bednarek).

Frequent contact of children with electronic devices such as TVs, smartphones and tablets can have an adverse effect on their health and development. One of the main threats raised in this context concerns the proper development of the brain, especially in the first years of life, when it is the most dynamic and susceptible to the influence of external and emotional factors. Research shows that the full development of a child requires a variety of stimuli and experiencing the world with all the senses. Limiting these experiences and one-sided contact with the screen may negatively affect the development of neural structures in the child's brain. This is an important warning that points to the need for a balanced approach to the use of electronic devices among the youngest (Walsh i inni, 2018). To ensure the proper development of a child, it is necessary to engage all the senses through interactions with other people who devote time and attention to him. Children develop their cognitive, language, motor and social skills through such interactions. Therefore, you cannot rely solely on modern technologies such as smartphones and tablets as the main source of entertainment and learning for children. Playing with loved ones, reading books and other direct experiences are irreplaceable in the process of learning about the world by children. You should be aware that excessive use of mobile devices and access to age-inappropriate content may cause concentration problems. This, in turn, can negatively affect

learning to read, write and develop social skills. In addition, excess time spent in front of the screen, especially before bedtime, can lead to sleep disorders and negatively affect the regeneration of the child's body. There is also a risk of eye damage from prolonged exposure of children to screen content. In addition, the manipulation of screens can adversely affect the development of fine motor skills, i.e. the ability to precisely move fingers and hands. Children who use the Internet and mobile devices excessively are at risk of addiction. Even very young children can experience difficulties in functioning, react emotionally or even aggressively when they are deprived of access to the web and their favorite content. That's why it's important to balance screen time with other activities such as outdoor play, reading, creative pursuits, and interacting with other people. Appropriate proportions will ensure the child's comprehensive development, a healthy lifestyle and will allow him to discover the world in different ways.

The main and fundamental threat related to the use of Internet resources by children and young people is exposure to inappropriate content that may evoke negative emotions or promote dangerous behavior. The harmfulness of such content stems from its potential impact on the psyche and behavior of young people (Polak, 2014). Among these inappropriate content, pornography and material presenting violence and promoting behaviors harmful to health, such as drug use, self-harm and suicide, are particularly dangerous for children and young people. Exposure to such content can negatively affect children's emotional, cognitive and social development. They can cause shock, fear, confusion and introduce inappropriate patterns and values. It is therefore important to protect children from this content and provide them with the right tools and support to recognize and deal with it. The results of various studies clearly confirm that children and teenagers in Poland often come into contact with content that is harmful to them. However, it is difficult to accurately determine the scale of this problem for several reasons. First, some young people may be reluctant to admit such contact because of shame or fear of the consequences. Second, the definitions of this content vary from study to study, making it difficult to compare results. Nevertheless, there is unanimity on the need to take action to protect children and young people from negative content and to educate them on how to identify and deal with it. In 2017, the Empowering Children Foundation (FDDS), commissioned by the Ministry of Health, conducted surveys on a representative sample of children and youth throughout Poland (Makaruk, Włodarczyk i Michalski, 2017). The results clearly show that a significant proportion of children and teenagers aged 11-18 had contact with pornographic and sexualizing content. It is particularly important that the older the age group, the greater the scale of this contact. In the 15-16 age group, 55% of respondents declared contact with such materials, and in the oldest group (17-18 years old) this percentage was as high as 63%. Moreover, around 50% of young Internet users from the latter group who had contact with such content admitted to using it regularly, which means that they watched it at least once a week. In addition, 22% of all young Internet users aged 13-18 declared watching pornography containing both verbally and

physically aggressive content (2017). The research confirmed that both girls and boys had a similar percentage of exposure to pornographic content. The results clearly indicate the negative psychosocial effects of viewing such content and encouraging young people to engage in risky sexual behavior. People who have experienced pornography are three times more likely to engage in practices such as sending nude or semi-naked pictures (sexting) and five times more likely to be recipients of them. Additionally, daily porn users are twice as likely to initiate their sexual activity before the age of 15. These results are important because they suggest that viewing pornography can have serious consequences for young people's development, both emotionally and socially.

Another threat that should be paid attention to is cyberbullying, i.e. a form of violence that uses modern technologies, such as the Internet and mobile phones. In short, it consists of harassment, intimidation, blackmail and posting degrading content via the web. One of the manifestations of cyberbullying, especially in the context of peer violence on the Internet, may be publishing intimate photos or blackmailing them without the knowledge and consent of the person depicted in them. While this is often a less discussed topic in the public sphere than young people's access to pornography, it is still a significant problem for young people. We often focus on extreme cases of cyberbullying, such as suicide attempts by teenagers who cannot stand the bullying. However, the phenomenon is widespread and its negative impact on the psychological well-being of many young people is widespread. The definition and scope of this phenomenon are difficult to define unambiguously, because it is of a complex nature. Often the terms "cyberbullying" and "cyberbullying" are used in the context of violence among children and adolescents, although some definitions do not exclude adults. Examples of cyberbullying also include impersonating someone online without their consent. This phenomenon has serious consequences for victims, affecting their well-being, emotional and social functioning. According to Pyżalski, who researched this problem (2012), and based on the works of some foreign authors, two terms can be distinguished: electronic aggression and cyberbullying. Electronic bullying refers to single acts of online violence, while cyberbullying refers to prolonged, intentional online harassment from which the victim is unable to defend himself. The mental health effects of cyberbullying on victims can be serious and include a range of negative effects. People who experience cyberbullying are more likely to develop depression, have a higher risk of becoming addicted to substances such as alcohol or drugs, may have learning difficulties, and may experience suicidal thoughts or attempts. Additionally, common consequences of cyberbullying include social anxiety, lowered self-esteem, and psychosomatic disorders such as eating or sleeping problems (Pyżalski, 2014).

Children and young people are spending more and more time on the Internet, which is associated with the risk of addiction. Parents often do not control their children's access to the Internet, which can have serious consequences. Online games, especially addictive ones, are gaining popularity among the youngest. The risk faced by children and young people is



participation in dangerous online games, which are sometimes packed with violence and aggression. Regular aggressive actions in the virtual world can lead to the blurring of the line between what is good and bad, which in turn can reduce the moral sensitivity of children. Exposure to these types of online games that promote violence and aggression can have a negative impact on children's morality and values. The virtual environment can result in a loss of the ability to distinguish between right and wrong behavior and a decrease in empathy and compassion towards others. It is worth emphasizing that exposing children to prolonged and frequent participation in aggressive online games poses a serious threat to their developing morality and may have a negative impact on their further social development. It is necessary to consciously monitor and limit children's access to such content and educate them on moral and ethical values to support the proper development of their morality (Braun-Galkowska i Ulfik, 2002). Unfortunately, adults often downplay this problem, which can lead to social maladjustment, learning difficulties and health problems.

Computer games can lead to serious addiction, which has a number of negative consequences, such as apathy, aggression, irritability, depression, mental breakdown and even suicide attempts (Andrzejewska, 2014). Addiction to computer games can lead to indifference to other areas of life, loss of interest and involvement in real social relationships. Strong involvement in the virtual world is often associated with emotional irritability and an increased tendency to aggression, which can carry over into everyday life. The effects of computer game addiction can also be psychologically and emotionally disruptive. Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, depression and serious emotional crises can occur, which can lead to mental breakdowns. Some video game addicts may even attempt suicide as a reaction to their emotional and social difficulties. It is worth noting that addiction to computer games is a serious problem that requires attention and appropriate support. Effective interventions include awareness and education about healthy computer gaming, access to therapy and psychological support, as well as social and family support.

The Internet plays an important role as a means of communication, access to information and a form of entertainment for young people. However, there is a risk of Internet abuse that occurs when an individual loses control over their use of the Internet, feels compelled to spend time online, and suffers negative consequences. One of the commonly used definitions of Internet abuse indicates a situation where the time spent online and the intensity of use get out of control, leading to the neglect of other aspects of life, generating problems on various levels or causing subjective suffering (Makaruk i Wójcik, 2012). According to the research report, (Makaruk, Włodarczyk i Michalski, 2017) half of the surveyed students did not show any symptoms of Internet abuse. However, 49% of respondents noticed some disturbing behavior in themselves that occurred often or quite often. One in four respondents aged 11 to 18 (26%) admitted that they often or quite often browse the Internet, even if they are not interested in a given topic. 23% of the respondents tried unsuccessfully to limit the time spent

on the Internet, 17% felt uncomfortable when they did not have access to the Internet, and 16% neglected their family, friends, school or hobbies due to the use of the Internet. Every 12th person (8%) admitted that they neglected eating or sleeping due to the use of the Internet.

It is worth noting that there is a link between excessive use of the Internet and social and mental problems, such as depression, social isolation, aggression and difficulties with concentration and attention. This association may indicate that people struggling with these problems often turn to heavy Internet use as a form of escape, but it may also suggest that overuse of the Internet contributes to the aggravation of these problems, such as difficulties in establishing social relationships. However, it is impossible to clearly determine in which direction this relationship occurs. It is possible that people who already have social and psychological problems are more likely to abuse the Internet to ease their discomfort or to escape reality. On the other hand, excessive use of the Internet can lead to aggravating these problems, hindering healthy social and emotional functioning. In any case, it is important to understand that the abuse of the Internet can have negative consequences for the psychological and social well-being of an individual. It is necessary to use the Internet consciously and moderately, as well as support and understanding for people who may struggle with problems related to this phenomenon.

Inappropriate contacts and messages pose a serious threat to the safety of young people. Children often use various communication platforms such as text messaging, chats, video communication apps, etc. However, there is a risk that they may come into contact with the wrong people who may take advantage of their naivety and inexperience. Using instant messaging is the second most popular activity among young people on the Internet. As many as 80% of teenagers aged 14 to 17 use them at least once a week. Chats and messengers are very tempting for children and teenagers because they offer them many opportunities. They give an opportunity to establish contacts with other people, build interpersonal relationships that are not limited only to the family and peer group. In addition, they enable the creation of a new online identity that may differ from the usual behavior of a given person. The use of chat rooms and messengers can be especially helpful for shy individuals and those who do not feel accepted by their peer group (Makaruk i Wójcik, 2012). Thanks to them, they have the opportunity to make contacts and interact with other users, which can contribute to the development of social skills and openness to others. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that the use of chats and messengers also carries some risks. Be careful and realize that not all Internet users are honest and safe. Most young people actively use the Internet as a communication space, but they expose themselves to potential dangers.

In some cases, children may become victims of criminals who use the Internet for sexual purposes, recruitment to criminal groups, sects or incitement to behavior harmful to life and health. The youngest Internet users are particularly susceptible to the risk of dangerous contacts, both on social networks and when using messengers. In these places, it is

possible to start relationships with strangers without proper identity verification. This creates a situation where perpetrators can change their identities by pretending to be someone else in order to make contact with children. Social networking sites are popular with young people and often share personal information that is not properly secured from strangers. This gives perpetrators easy access to information about potential victims. In addition, online games are very popular among children and teenagers, and many of them allow for messaging, multimedia sharing and chatting. Online criminals are increasingly using these features to contact potential victims, which is a serious threat. It is important to educate young people on how to use these tools safely and to be aware of the risks of disclosing private information and interacting with strangers.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

There are many reasons for the growing dangers of the Internet. These include: free and unlimited access to the Internet, lack of proper education of children and adults in the field of safe use of the Internet, misconception of some people that the Internet does not pose any threat, liberal rules and law applicable on the Internet, and too early age when children start using the Internet. Excessive use of the Internet can also lead to irreversible changes in a person's personality. It should be noted that there will be new virtual threats that will particularly affect children, due to their immature psychological and socio-moral development. In order to counter these threats, it is necessary to educate children from an early age on online safety and to raise awareness of adults in various ways, especially through the media.

In order to protect children from dangerous content, it is important that parents and guardians are aware of this risk and take appropriate steps. Implement rules for using the Internet, install content blockers that are inappropriate for children, monitor your children's online activities. Working with them is key to understanding what platforms, apps and websites they visit and what content they consume. It is important that parents and guardians actively communicate with their children about safe internet use and educate them about dangerous content.

Addiction to social media is a real threat to children and young people. Therefore, it is essential that parents and guardians take steps to protect and educate children on the healthy use of these platforms. Policy making, conversations, monitoring, education and support are key to ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Please remember that as adults, we have a responsibility to protect our children from the negative effects of social media addiction and to promote a healthy balance between the virtual and real worlds

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## WSFiP conducts research and educates students in the following fields:

### **Finance and Accounting**

- Treasure Administration
- Banking
- Corporate Finance
- Accountancy
- Accounting and Finance in Public Sector Institutions
- Corporate Accounting and Controlling
- Audit
- Management and Finance in Real Estate

### **Cyberspace and Social Communication**

- Communication and Image Creations
- Safety in the Cyberspace

### **Internal Security**

- Administration and Management in Security
- Security and Public Order
- Security and Development in Euro-region
- Security of Information and Information Systems
- Security in Business
- Criminology and Investigative Studies
- Criminology and Forensics
- Protection of People and Property
- Public Order Agencies

### **Law**

- this program gives strong legal foundations to undertake further professional training for judges, prosecutors, attorneys, notaries, bailiffs.

### **Administration**

- Fiscal Administration
- Local Government Administration

### **Logistics**

- this program gives good preparation for work in logistics companies as well as in other economic and administrative units.

### **Information Technology**

- Databases and Net Systems
- Computer Graphics and Multimedia Techniques
- Design of Applications for Mobile Devices
- IT Services in Public Administration Units

### **Postgraduate courses**

- Administrative studies
- Fiscal Administration
- Law and management in health service