



COMPARING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF SENDING, RECEIVING, OR BEING ASKED FOR NUDE AND SEMI-NUDE IMAGES OR VIDEO IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE UK.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner (Australia), Netsafe (New Zealand) and UK Safer Internet Centre with University of Plymouth (UK) have collaborated on a research study into issues related to young people's experiences of the creation and sharing of nude and semi-nude images.

While each study is unique to its country context, the partners worked closely in the planning and delivery to enable a comparison of young people's experiences across those jurisdictions.

“ Only around **5%** of Australian and NZ young people said that they had sent images of themselves in the last 12 months. ”

WHAT WE DID

Australia and New Zealand both conducted national representative surveys to measure, describe and understand the attitudes, behaviours and experiences of young people aged 14 - 17.

The UK conducted an online survey for young people aged between 11 - 17 across ten schools. This was complemented with focus group discussions involving 14 - 15 year olds talking in depth about how sexting affects their lives. This builds on previous research activities in this area in 2009 and 2013.

The purpose of this shared research study was to better understand the:-

1. Prevalence of the sending and sharing of nude or nearly nude images or videos both solicited and unsolicited; and
2. Influences and motivations for this behaviour.

THE KEY FINDINGS

The experience of young people across all three countries is similar in many key respects.

In general, the differences between their responses to the key questions posed to them are small.

While adults and the media often use the term “sexting” to talk about sending nude or semi-nude images or videos, young people use a variety of descriptions for this practice (see sidebar). This reflects the range of contexts surrounding this type of behaviour.

We understand that “sexting” is an evolving and complex term because technologies, and the way people have adopted them, continue to change rapidly. Having said that, “sexting” is defined here as any act related to sending, receiving, requesting or being asked for mostly, but not always, self-generated images or video. These behaviours may arise for a variety of reasons (e.g., volunteering an image, being asked for one, part of “courtship” or to intimidate or abuse).

YOUNG PEOPLE PERCEIVE THAT SENDING AND SHARING NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE IMAGES OR VIDEOS IS A MORE COMMON PRACTICE THAN IT ACTUALLY IS.

Only around 5% of Australian and NZ young people said that they had sent images of themselves in the last 12 months.

This was reflected in UK discussion groups where young people talked about “repeat offenders” i.e., just a few people in a year group that would send indecent images that would then propagate around school and social groups.

The percentage of young people across all countries who know someone that shared, received or been asked for nude pictures or videos **in the last 12 months ranged from around 20 - 55%. Yet, around 9 out of 10 young people in Australia and NZ perceived that others their age engaged in these behaviours, with nearly half of them believing it happened frequently.**



WHILE A SMALL MINORITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SHARING THIS MATERIAL THEMSELVES, THERE ARE A RANGE OF WAYS THAT THEY EXPERIENCE THE BROADER EFFECTS OF THIS PRACTICE.

In the last year around 1 in 5 of young people received a nude image or video they didn't ask for, and the same amount had been asked for an image of themselves.

Overall, around 1 in 3 (NZ and Aus) young people had some direct experience of sending, receiving, being asked for (or asking someone else for) this type of material. In the UK, focus group discussions showed a higher proportion of young people saying they received unsolicited images as a result of being involved in group chats and similar.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE CALL “SEXTING”?

NUDIES (Australia)
DICK PICS (UK, NZ, Aus)
Nudes (UK, NZ)
NAKED PICS (NZ)

COMMENTS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

COMMENTS FROM YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

"A lot of girls at my school just post inappropriate pictures of themselves on snapchat and Facebook, for example, lingerie or bikini shots, for attention - many of them have accounts their parents don't know about"



Australia Male

Dick pics are so common and a lot of guys do them. Not just guys but girls do them as well but more guys do it. We are learning and getting used to the world around us and it is common.

Australia Male, 15

COMMENTS FROM YOUNG BRITAINS

"Although it is illegal, if there is no pressure put on the sender to do it then consequences shouldn't be as harsh, unless the person who they send them to has a fake account"

UK Male, 14

"Adults overreact and take it as it's their fault but it's the child's decision if they want to send nudes"

UK Female, 13

"I think that there are not enough lessons which actually tell people what to do if they are involved, but there are too many about 'keeping safe'"

UK Female, 13

I don't know, some of my friends send nudes and stuff while some don't, I don't know how I would talk to them about it.

Australia Male, 16

COMMENTS FROM YOUNG NEW ZEALANDERS ON WHY TEENS SEND IMAGES OR VIDEOS

"I feel like it's become a bit of a norm, I've definitely considered it but I'm just too worried about how they could be shared to people don't know. I feel like people do things like that online but they wouldn't do it in real life, because online it 'doesn't really count' as it's not real or physical, it's 'just' a photo"



NZ Female, 17

"We are still growing up and we're unsure about our bodies and sexuality and our preferences. It's also a good way to gain trust in a relationship"

NZ Male, 16

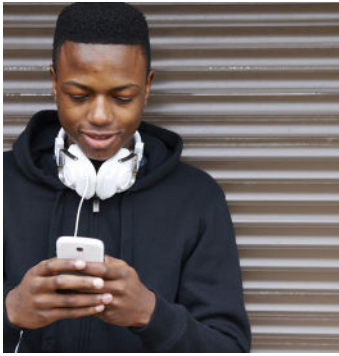
"For fun. Because they're confident and wanted people to like them"

NZ Female, 17

"Cause they think they look good and want to share it but forget that it will be shared everywhere"

NZ Female, 15





YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF THIS PRACTICE IS NOT THE SAME, PARTICULARLY WHEN FOCUSING ON GENDER.

Across all three countries more girls received images without requesting them than boys. They were also asked more frequently for images of themselves; **In Australia, girls are almost 3 times more likely to receive requests than boys (21% of girls vs. 8% of boys)** and the most likely source of request to share an image is from a stranger.

“ Almost 70% of UK respondents said pressure can be a factor in the decision to send an image ”

WHAT'S NEXT

A report detailing the comparative findings across all three countries will be published. If you are interested in receiving a copy of this when it is published contact research@esafety.gov.au.

Netsafe will be publishing a full report on the NZ study. Contact neilm@netsafe.org.nz for more information.

The Office of the eSafety Commissioner will publish these and further findings from its 2017 Digital Youth Participation survey. Contact the research@esafety.gov.au for more information.

The UK Safer Internet Centre, in partnership with Plymouth University, will be publishing the UK report at www.saferinternet.org.uk

MOST YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OR IMPACT OF THESE PRACTICES ON THEIR LIVES, AND ARE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES.

Overall, young people disagreed more strongly with statements that suggested that this practice was not a problem. In all three countries, around three-quarters agreed that people should be punished for threatening to share images.

Only 1 in 10 young New Zealanders thought that sharing images was a good way to explore themselves as they were growing up. A similar percentage of the young people surveyed in the UK saw nothing wrong with engaging in the distribution of nudes. Young Australians' reaction to being asked to share a nude or nearly nude image or video of themselves was mostly negative, with the majority feeling uncomfortable or disgusted. However, discussions with UK youngsters suggest that some might be flattered if asked for a nude by someone they liked and **nearly 70% said that a factor in sending nudes could be receiving compliments.**

Most (72%) Australian teenagers disagree that they often feel pressured into sending those sorts of images. UK and NZ children were more indifferent with 30 - 40% suggesting that there was pressure to send. Almost 70% of UK respondents said pressure can be a factor in the decision to send an image. However, just over half in NZ, and three quarters in the UK, think that nude, or nearly nude, pictures or videos are sent to seek attention, gain social approval, or because of peer pressure.

In the UK and Australia around 60 - 70% knew the practice could be illegal. However, discussions with UK young people highlighted that while they are generally aware of the legalities, they did not believe that is enough to prevent someone from sending a nude.

