KOALA: Kids Online Anonymity and Lifelong Autonomy

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30 May, 2019
Children growing up in a “smart” society

In the UK,

- 52% of 3-4yo go online, for nearly 9h a week
- 44% 5-10yo have been provided with their own tablets

Source: ‘Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report’, Ofcom, 29 November 2018
“9 in 10 Google Play Store apps are sending data to Google”

“participants demanded more control and transparency”
Family apps are amongst the top associated with distinct trackers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Super genre</th>
<th># apps</th>
<th>Med.</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>&gt;10</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>13.4%</td>
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</table>

Parents’ concerns and mediation strategies

Data tracking and surveillance raise less widely known privacy concerns

“detailed information from the player’s actions within the game world ... may be analysed to create in-depth profiles of a player’s cognitive abilities and personality”
The KOALA Project

• Received ~£68K from Oxford IAA between December’17 and March’19

• Support secondment to Anna Freud Center for Children and Families and evidenced-based impact collection
Aims and Objectives

• To assess how our existing privacy management tool can be adapted to help educators and parents mediate children’s choice of technologies and their awareness of risks

• To work together with children’s mental health researchers to explore the impact of digital technologies on young children
Report 1:
- Online survey to >250 families
  - **Explore** challenges faced by parents & approaches for safeguarding young children

Report 2:
- Semi-structured interviews with 20 families
  - **Understand** parents’ mediation approaches for safeguarding young children and children’s perspectives

Report 3:
- Focus groups with nearly 30 children from 16 different schools
  - **Identify** children’s current knowledge gaps and design inputs to our digital intervention

Report 4:
- Co-Design workshop with 6 families
  - **Collect** feedback to improve our current app prototype

February 2018 - April 2018 - December 2018 - March 2019

**K**ids **O**nline **A**nonymity & **L**ifelong **A**utonomy

- Select apps from ‘kids’ or ‘family’ categories
- Talk to your children about asking you for help when they need it.
- Avoid providing any sensitive personal information to the app.
- Check ‘Age Rating’ of the apps.
- Check the app’s Privacy Permissions.
Demo
Impact from KOALA

- Reached out to 16 schools and 50 families
- Contributed to policy development: ICO’s Code for Age Appropriate Design
- Expanded our national and international research network
- Increased Oxford’s research visibility in algorithmic children
Next Step

Research grant submissions
- Investigating impact on children’s digital wellbeing
- Developing education materials for teachers to facilitate UK children development of digital literacy, particularly regarding online data privacy

Continue the tool development
- Addressing a critical market gap for parental mediation of children’s use of digital technologies
- Ongoing recruitment for a small scale field trial
Standards of age-appropriate design
1. Best interests of the child
2. Age-appropriate application
3. Transparency
4. Detrimental use of data
5. Policies and community standards
6. Default settings
7. Data minimisation
8. Data sharing
9. Geolocation
10. Parental controls
11. Profiling
12. Nudge techniques
13. Connected toys and devices
14. Online tools
15. Data protection impact assessments
16. Governance and accountability
We thank all the schools and families for their time and support!

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