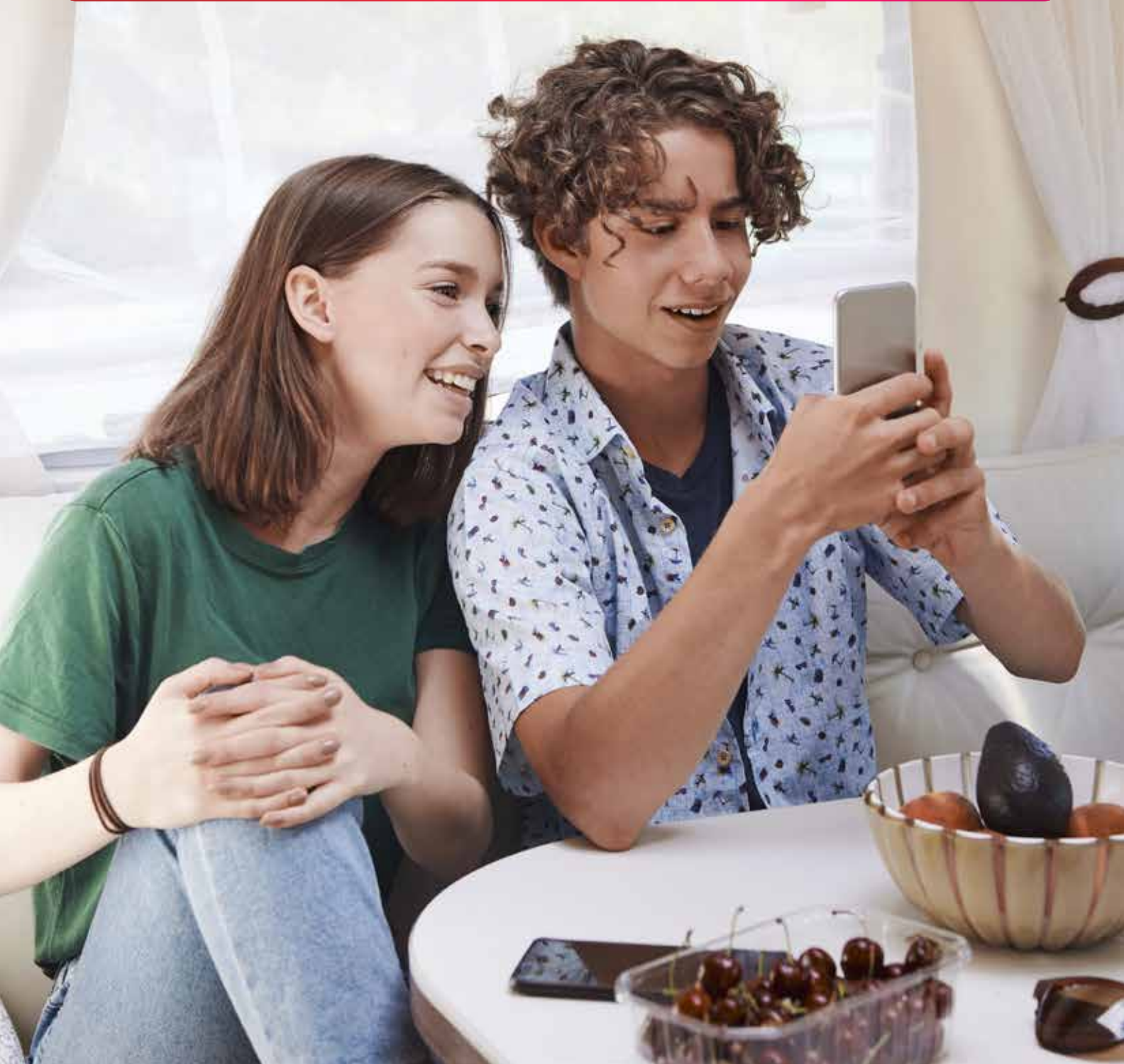




Life Behind the Screens of Parents, Tweens, and Teens

The 2022 McAfee® Connected Family Study—Australia



Executive Summary

McAfee's first-ever Global Connected Family Study furthers our commitment to keeping families safe in a connected world, through understanding, education, and empowerment. In this ten-country study, we spoke with parents and their children to understand how they connect and protect themselves online.

Here, we uncovered universal beliefs about online protection, along with several nuances, all of which pinpointed tensions between parents and children when it comes to staying safe while enjoying life online.

The complete findings can be found in our full global report, available [here](#). In this regional report, we'll take a look at findings specific to Australia—where families differed from global trends and instances where they set some of their own.

- **Comparison One:** Mobile Maturity
- **Comparison Two:** Top Devices
- **Comparison Three:** Concern and Frequency of Cyberbullying
- **Comparison Four:** Account Theft and Financial Information Leaks
- **Comparison Five:** Gendered Protection Bias



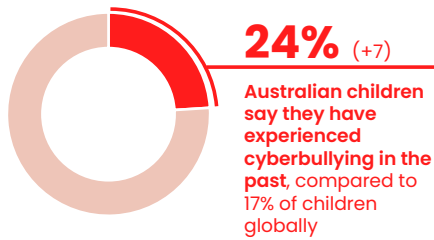
Unique Trends in Australia

Children in Australia report a high rate of cyberbullying, the second highest in the world, and express strong concerns about social media’s impact on bullying.

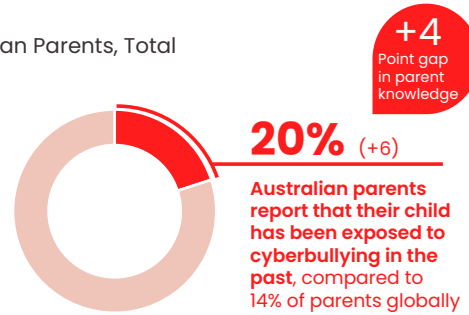
Second only to the U.S., Australia reported the highest rate of cyberbullying in all countries studied and tied the U.S. when it came to the parental awareness gap that their child is being cyberbullied (4%).

Parents’ Knowledge and Children’s Experience with Cyberbullying

Australian Children, Total



Australian Parents, Total

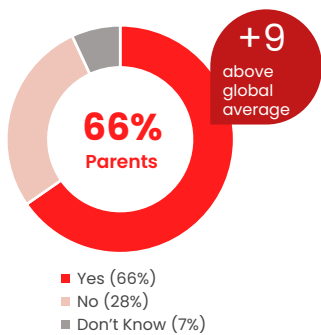


CI5A. Have you been exposed to Cyber bullying in the past? (Base: Australian children, n=1,106)
 PC15A. Has your child been exposed to Cyber bullying in the past? (Base: Australian parents, n=1,441)

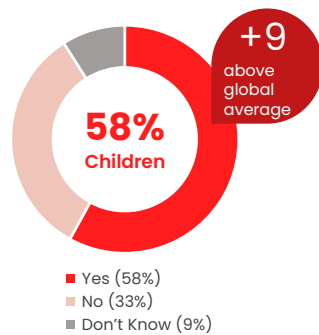
Parents and children in Australia further expressed their concerns about cyberbullying more strongly than any other nation. They both said that posting on social media could lead to bullying or abuse at a rate of 9% higher than the global average. Responses from girls were the strongest, as were responses from teens aged 15 and up.

Perception that Posting on Social Media and Public Forums Could Expose Children to Bullying/Abuse

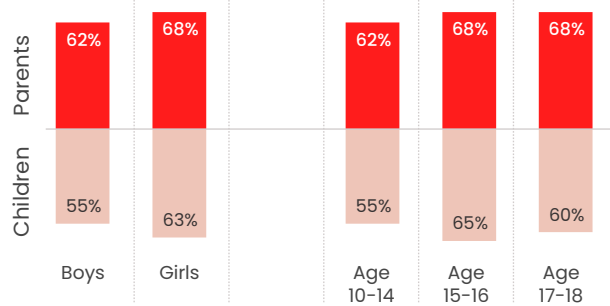
Australian Parents, Total



Australian Children, Total



Australian Parents and Children, by Child Gender and Age



PC15B. Do you think posting on social media like Facebook, Tiktok or other public forums could expose your child to bullying or abuse? (Base: Australian parents, n=1,441)
 CI5B. Do you think posting on social media like Facebook, Tiktok or other public forums could expose you to bullying or abuse? (Base: Australian children, n=1,106)



Comparison One: Mobile Maturity

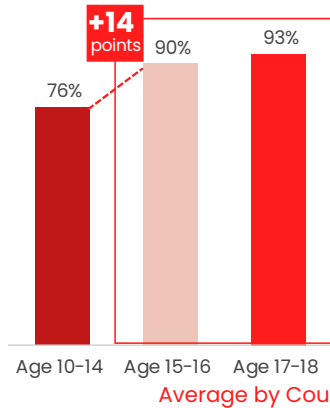
Children in Australia report using mobile devices at an early age just as other children do and continue to increase their smartphone usage largely in step with the rest of the world.

As mentioned above, children worldwide reported a major uptick in mobile device usage as they approached their mid-teens. Our study found that children hit their online stride right about the same point in life, between 15 and 16 years old. At this point, their mobile usage jumps significantly, so much so that it approaches levels that they will carry into adulthood.

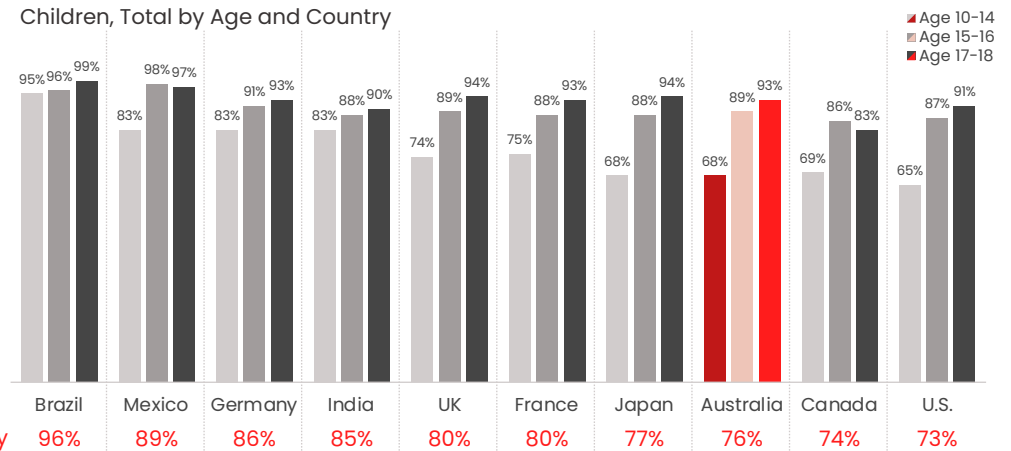
Yet their connected lives start much earlier, with smartphones and mobile devices leading the way online exposing them to the broader internet full of apps, chats, entertainment, and social media—along with the benefits and risks nearly right away.

Mobile/Smartphone Device Usage

Children, Total by Age



Children, Total by Age and Country



C1. Which of the following devices do you use? (Base: Children, n=12,057)

For children in Australia, this trend holds true when compared to other children around the world. Of note, smartphone use at a younger age trailed well behind the international average. However, as children entered the mid-teens and then approached adulthood, the figures fell in line with their peers around the globe.



Comparison Two: Top Devices

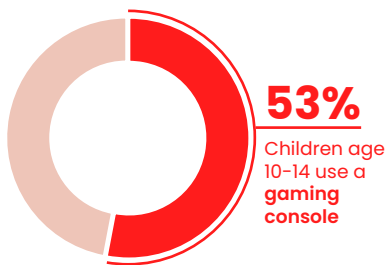
While smartphones come in first for parents and children alike, the second-most important device differs—and differs in how it is viewed when keeping connected with family.

Parents and children in Australia say that their mobile device is the most important one in their life. Parents placed mobile in their top two with their smartphone at 65% followed their computer or laptop at 41%. Tweens and teens put their smartphone at the top of the list as well, yet at 71%, followed by their gaming console at 65%.

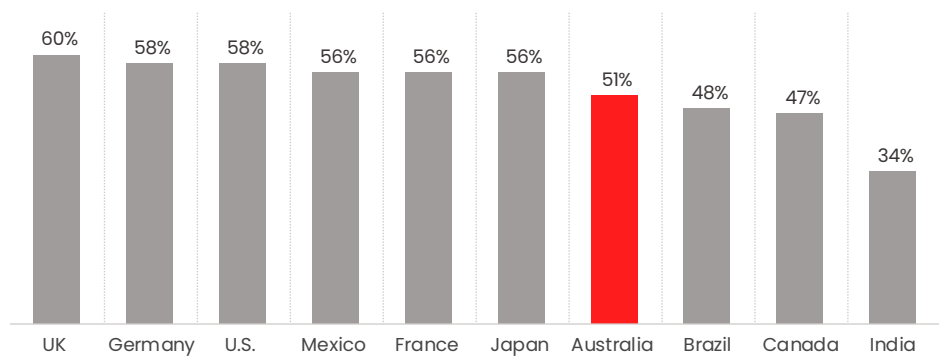
Tweens and young teens in Australia fall just below the average in gaming console usage, with 51% of them saying they play on connected game systems, 2% lower than the rest of the world.

Gaming Console Device Usage

Children, Age 10-14



Children, Age 10-14 by Country

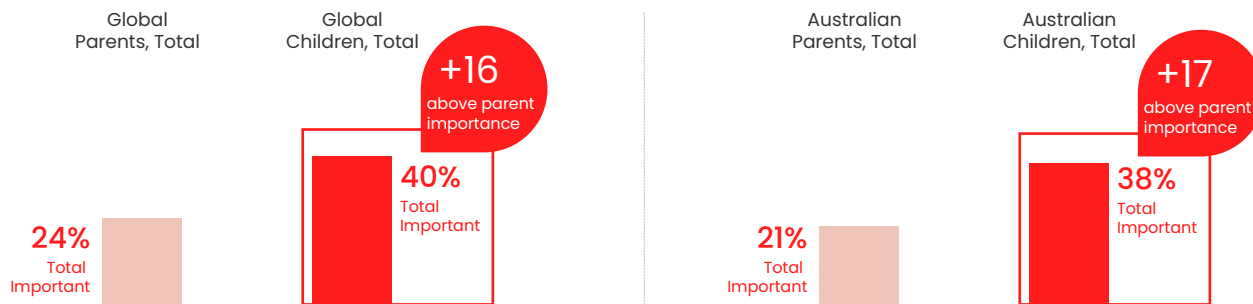


C1. Which of the following devices do you use? (Base: Children age 10-14, n=7,571)

REPORT

Of further interest is that children said their gaming console is their second-most important device for keeping connected with family, with 38% expressing this, in line with the global average of 40%. Meanwhile, parents appear to place a much lower importance on the gaming console as a way to connect with family at 21%.

Perceived Importance of Gaming Consoles when Connecting with Family



Perhaps unsurprisingly, both parents and children said the smartphone was the most important device for maintaining family connections, with parents at 59% and children at 63%—both of which came very close to the global norm, which was 59% for parents and 64% for children.



Tweens and young teens in Australia fall just below the average in gaming console usage.



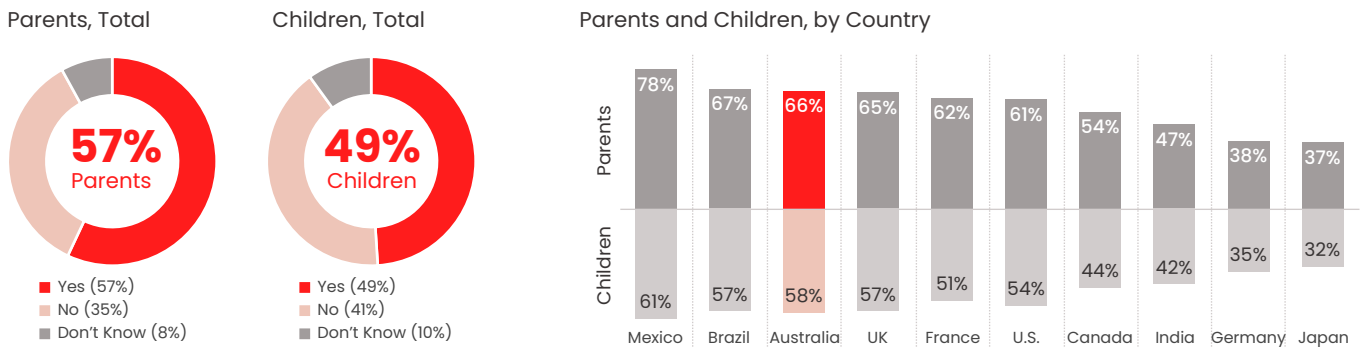
Comparison Three: Concern and Frequency of Cyberbullying

While children claim that the smartphone is the most important device they own, risks come with that, including early exposure to cyberbullying—well above the global average.

Both parents and children expressed mixed feelings about posting on social media because it could possibly lead to bullying or abuse. Globally, 57% of parents worried about such bullying and abuse on social media, while 49% of children said they held the same worry.

In Australia, those figures trended higher, with 66% of parents stating their worry, 9% above the global average—and 58% of children saying likewise, also 9% above the global average.

Perception that Posting on Social Media and Public Forums Could Expose Children to Bullying or Abuse



PC15B. Do you think posting on social media like Facebook, Tiktok or other public forums could expose your child to bullying or abuse? (Base: Parents, n=15,156)
 CI5B. Do you think posting on social media like Facebook, Tiktok or other public forums could expose you to bullying or abuse? (Base: Children, n=12,030)

These figures trended highest in Mexico, with parents at 78% and children at 61%. Brazil was not far behind at 67% and 57%. Note the low end of the scale, Germany's figures were 38% and 35% with Japan at 37% and 32%.

As far as exposure to cyberbullying, 24% of children in Australia reported having experienced it at some time. Globally, children reported a rate of 17%, putting Australia seven points above the global average. Note how this compares to the highest and lowest reported rates, with the U.S. at 28% and Japan at 6%.



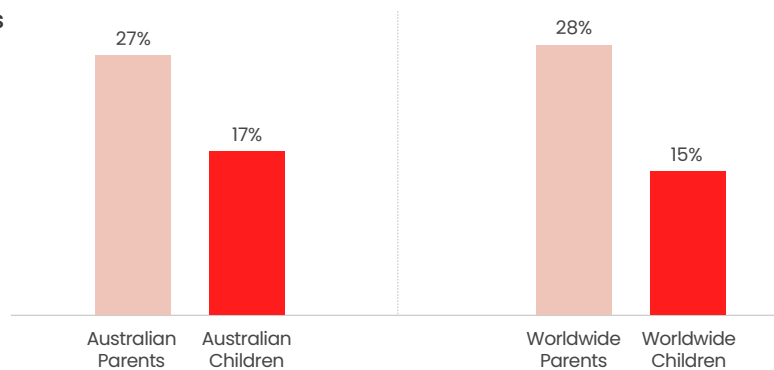
Comparison Four: Account Theft and Financial Information Leaks

In addition to cyberbullying, families reported their experiences with other online threats, indicating issues with online privacy and security—at a slightly higher rate than the rest of the world.

Parents in Australia reported the attempted theft of online accounts at 27% with their children at 17%. There was a slight difference in reporting here, however. When asked if their child had been exposed to possible online account theft, 15% of parents said so—two points lower than what children reported.

That 27% figure for parents in Australia is in line with global figures, with the international data putting parents at 28%. The same holds true for children. The international figure for children is 15%—which is 2% lower than for children in Australia. As for that difference in reporting, 14% of parents worldwide reported that their child had been exposed to possible theft—one point lower than what children reported.

Attempted Theft of Online Accounts
Reported Rate



Both parents and children reported leaks of financial information as well, which could include bank info, credit or debit card info, or other identifying information. In Australia, 23% of parents said they had experienced it at some point in the past—while 12% of children reported the same.

Australian parents and children reported this threat at a similar rate to families worldwide, with parents 2% higher than the 21% average and children 2% higher than the 10% average.

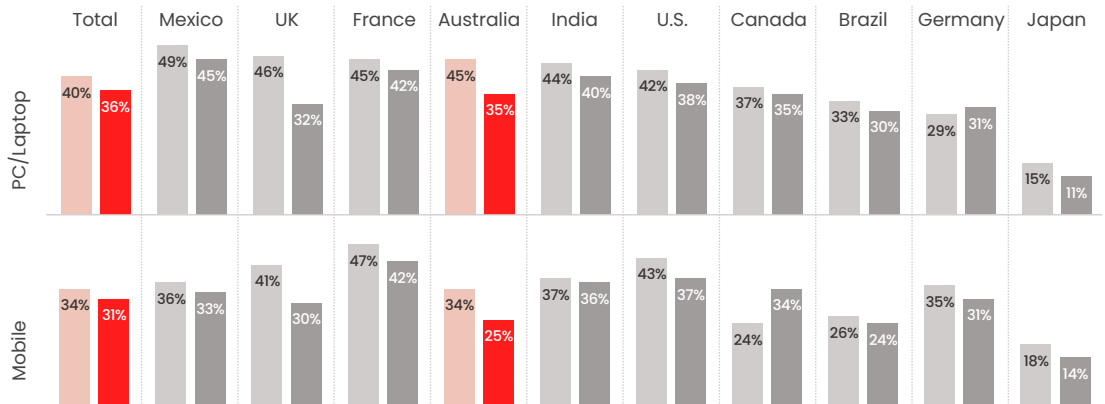


Comparison Five: Gendered Protection Bias

Globally, research showed that girls receive more protection and oversight online than boys, often markedly so in Australia, yet boys experience more threats online.

Using the presence of parental controls software as one measure, girls are protected more than boys worldwide—on both their computers and smartphones. This holds quite true in Australia as well. On computers, 45% of girls have parental controls software installed compared to 35% of boys, a difference of 10%. The gap is roughly the same on mobile at 9% in favor of girls, with the rates being 34% and 25%, respectively.

Parent has Installed Parental Controls Software on Child's PC/Laptop or Mobile Device



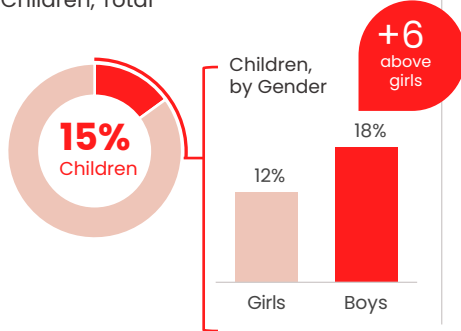
PC7. Which of the following security/privacy precautions have you taken for your child on their PC/laptop? Select all that apply. (Multiple responses allowed) Parental Controls Software (Base: Parents with children age 10-14 who use a PC/laptop, n=3,569) | PC8. Which of the following security/privacy precautions have you taken for your child on their mobile phone/smartphone? Select all that apply. (Multiple responses allowed) Parental Controls Software (Base: Parents with children age 10-14 who use a mobile/smartphone, n=5,740)

This gap continues as we look at other forms of protection and oversight. This is most notable for girls aged 15 to 16, their parents are more likely to check their calls and texts at 31%, with boys at 28%. Checking on the websites and apps their child visits or uses showed bias as well at this age. Fifty one percent of parents said they do so for girls and only 42% for boys.

Of note, any such gap should be seen in light of the following: boys worldwide report experiencing threats online at a rate higher than girls.

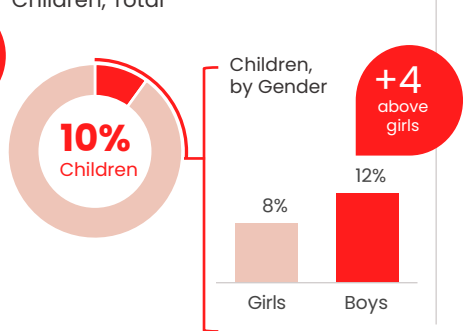
Experience with Attempted Thefts of Online Accounts

Children, Total



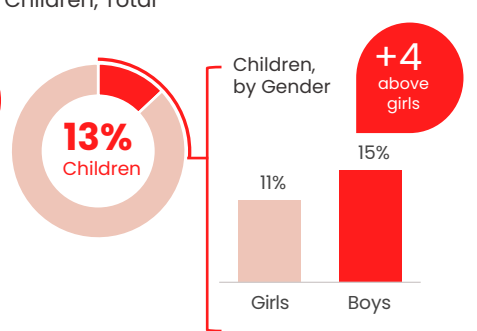
Experience with Leaks of Financial Information

Children, Total



Experience with Unauthorized Use of Personal Data

Children, Total



C16A. Have you been exposed to attempts of theft of your online accounts (gaming, social, etc.) in the past? (Base: Children, n=12,030)
C17A. Have you been exposed to leaks of your financial information (bank, credit card, passport or other identifying information) in the past? (Base: Children, n=12,030)
C18A. Have you had unauthorized use of your personal data (spam, fraud, attempts to send virus to my contacts) in the past? (Base: Children, n=12,030)

In all, this stands as a reminder that all children can stand to benefit from online protection and oversight from their parents.



Globally, research showed that girls receive more protection and oversight online than boys, often markedly so in Australia, yet boys experience more threats online.





For the full 2022 McAfee Connected Family Study Report, along with its detailed global findings, visit us for a [free download](#).

Survey Methodology

In December 2021 McAfee LLC conducted a study about beliefs and behaviors around digital participation and online protection among members of connected families—as individuals and as a family unit.

Global survey of parents and children, with children answering alongside their parents.

Parents and children were surveyed together, with parents answering first and then bringing their children in to consent and answer.

These findings represent connected families not collections of individuals.

In multiple countries 15,500 parents of children in the age 10–18 participated in the study, as well as more than 12,000 of their children.

The research was conducted between December 13th–29th, 2021 by MSI-ACI via an online questionnaire to 15,500 parents and 12,057 children from 10 countries.

About McAfee

McAfee is a global leader in online protection. We're focused on protecting people, not devices. Our solutions adapt to our customers' needs and empower them to confidently experience life online through integrated, easy-to-use solutions.

For more information about online protection, visit us at mcafee.com/blogs