

fragFINN.de: The Net for Kids Germany



Type of intervention



Online/App

Target group, level of prevention and sub-groups:



Internet/Online | Online/App | Internet Related Only | German

Target population

Children aged from six to 12 years.

Delivery organisation

fragFINN started in 2007 as part of the initiative “A Net for Children” and was released as a project by the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter (FSM) e.V. In November 2009 a corporate society was founded, which is continuously funded by telecommunications and online media companies and industry associations.

Mode and context of delivery

fragFINN.de is a search engine designed specifically for children in Germany to surf the internet safely. fragFINN has also launched a free app for Android and Apple iOS, which provides an in-app browser for children to surf safely with mobile devices.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Trained staff (media-pedagogy experts) are required to check a website against a strict list of criteria to ensure the material on the website is age-appropriate for children aged six to 12 years old. This ensures that children only have access to websites which are suitable for them.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The search engine can be used at any time of day; suitable for use on computers, laptops and mobile devices.

Description of intervention

fragFINN aims at establishing a secure place in the Internet that allows children aged 6 to 12 years of age to surf the Web without any risk of them finding harmful content. Building up a 'whitelist' as a basis for the secure search engine for children www.fragFINN.de and the free browser app, fragFINN is promoting the positive diversity of the Internet for children. In this respect, children can pursue their interests over the full length and breadth of the Internet and learn how to use the medium responsibly and on their own.

The fragFINN 'whitelist' creates an internet environment that has been developed providing content for children which is harmless and child-friendly, whilst allowing easy access to interesting websites. This environment ensures that children do not come across inappropriate online content and supports children's continuous education in the field of media literacy. This 'whitelist' solution is a positive, pro-active approach, in contrast to the usual filters which are often based on blacklisting. To be included on the whitelist, websites must fulfil strict criteria which have been defined by specialists and are regularly revised and updated repeatedly by an independent expert team in the field of media education (for example, content suitable for children and chat rooms supervised by a moderator). Webmasters as well as parents and teachers are able to suggest websites to be included into the 'whitelist' through a specific web form.

Based on the fragFINN 'whitelist' the website provides a quick and easy access to websites appropriate to children's individual interests and offers suitable information to their questions. Furthermore the website provides a specific section for parents and teachers with information on the subject of safe surfing for children and various materials for download, for example a brochure, security software and a browser app for smartphones and tablets. Additionally, an alarm mechanism for children, parents, teachers and other users has been installed, which can be used to alert potentially harmful content to the media pedagogues.

fragFINN is part of the initiative "A Net for Children" launched by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth with the aim of bringing about lasting improvement to the internet landscape for children in Germany.

Facts and Figures

- The fragFINN 'whitelist' includes more than 11,000 domains, which were checked against the set of criteria for inclusion. Among them there are approximately 600 websites specifically addressing children.
- More than 7,000 proposals of websites to be included into the 'whitelist' have so far been made by content providers, children, parents and teachers.
- The team of media pedagogues receives round 400 e-mails a month by children, parents and content providers. This way active communication among the team and their different target groups can take place.

To keep children from straying beyond the secure sites on fragFINN's list, the computer needs certain protective technology. All of the available technologies are presented on the fragFINN website, but they are provided by external companies and associations (please see <http://www.fragfinn.de/kinderliste/eltern/kinderschutz/schutzsoftware.html>). Internet access can be limited to the whitelisted sites: for example, by using free software which can be downloaded from the fragFINN website. Once the protective software or other protective technology is activated children will only be able to access the websites included on the whitelist. There protective software offers various other functions such as time management, individual black- and whitelists to personalize the profiles to a user's needs and so on. When adults want to use the smartphone or computer, they need to type in their password so that they can surf freely beyond the fragFINN whitelist.

Evaluation

No independent evaluation has been undertaken, but usage gives an indication of its popularity.

- Growth of fragFINN whitelist up to 11,000 checked domains
- Among TOP 10 favourite websites of children in Germany (KIM-Studie 2012 http://www.mpfs.de/fileadmin/KIM-pdf12/KIM_2012.pdf)
- Users of fragFINN.de
 - 2013: ~ 535,000 visits/month, > 17.000 visits/day
 - 2014 (January to September): ~ 544,000 visits/month, ~ 18,000 visits/day
- fragFINN app
 - winner of „klicksafe Award for Safety on the Internet
 - Downloads fragFINN app: 24,500 (Android and iOS)
- More than 1,000 e-mails by children a year
- fragFINN set of criteria as best practice example for European guidelines for positive content (Expert Group “Positive Content” by the European Commission, EU-funded project POSCON <http://www.positivecontent.eu/>)

References

www.fragFINN.de

www.ein-netz-fuer-kinder.de

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