

AVG Digital Skills Study

What is it?

The AVG Digital Skills study is the second part of a yearlong piece of research called Digital Diaries.

Curated by Internet security company AVG, Digital Diaries aims to be the definitive report into how children are interacting with technology from birth in the European Union, North America, Australia / New Zealand and Japan.

The first study released in October 2010 looked at the increasing tendency of parents to upload pictures of their newborns up online with the result that children now have an online footprint on average when they are six months old.

This second study looks at the changing nature of childhood for 2-5 year olds. In particular, AVG wanted to find out to what extent very young children are now learning 'tech' skills faster than so-called life ones.

Methodology

As with the first study, AVG commissioned market research company Research Now to poll 2200 mothers with Internet access across the USA, Canada, the 'EU5' (UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain), Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

The mothers, all of who have children aged 2-5, were given a list of life skills and tech skills and were asked which their children could master.

The headline result

AVG's research shows that the skills set of today's 2-5 year olds is very different to that of kids 20 or 30 years ago.

While most small children can't swim, tie their shoelaces, or make breakfast unaided, they do know how to turn on computers, navigate with a mouse, play a computer game and increasingly – operate their parents' smartphones.

Comparison of tech and life skills – all countries

Tech skill	%	Life skill	%
Know how to operate a computer mouse	69%	Know how to complete a jigsaw	77%
Turn a computer on and off	63%	Can recognize their name with written	66%
Play a basic computer game	58%	Know how to ride a bike	52%
Know how to make a mobile phone call	28%	Know their home address	39%
Know how to open a web browser	25%	Can write 1 st and last name	37%
Can operate a smartphone or tablet app	19%	Know how to make their own breakfast	27%
Know how to navigate between websites	16%	Know how to swim unaided	20%
Know at least one web address	15%	Know what to do in an emergency (e.g. call 911/999)	20%
Know at least one email address	5%	Can tie own shoelaces	11%

Summary – more young children know how to play a computer game than ride a bike. More can make a mobile phone call than make their own breakfast. And almost as many can operate a smartphone or tablet app as swim unaided.

Top Tech Skills – Making mobile phone calls

- 1 – Italy 44%
- 2 – Germany 33%
- 3 – Japan 31%
- 4 – France 28%
- 5 – Spain 26%
- 6 – USA 25%
- 7 – Canada 24%
- 8 – UK 23%
- 9 – Australia 19%
- 10 – New Zealand 18%

Summary – Small children in continental Europe are increasingly using their parents' mobile phones as communication as well as 'play' devices

Top Tech Skills – Playing a computer game

- 1 – UK 70%
- 2 – France 70%
- 3 – Australia 66%
- 4 – Spain 62%
- 5 – USA 61%
- 6 – Canada 58%
- 7 – Italy 57%
- 8 – New Zealand 54%
- 9 – Japan 44%
- 10 – Germany 40%

Summary – In the UK and France over 2/3 of small children know how to play at least a basic ‘computer’ game. Only in Germany and Japan do less than half of 2-5 year olds have that ability.

Top Tech Skills – Operate at least one smartphone or tablet app

- 1 – USA 30%
- 2 – Australia 30%
- 3 – UK 26%
- 4 – Italy 19%
- 5 – Canada 18%
- 6 – France 18%
- 7 – Germany 17%
- 8 – Spain 13%
- 9 – New Zealand 12%
- 10 – Japan 11%

Summary – There is a large variation between countries where 2-5 year olds are able to use smartphone apps. Almost three times as many American and Australian children can operate at least one app compared to Japanese children.

Life and Tech Skills - by age of Mother

Life skills	All	Under 35	Over 35
Know how to ride a bike	52%	51%	53%
Know how to swim unaided	20%	16%	24%
Know their home address (street and no)	39%	37%	41%
Know how to make their own breakfast	27%	27%	26%
Can recognise their name when written	66%	63%	70%
Can write both his / her first and last name	37%	35%	40%
Can tie his / her own shoes unaided	11%	11%	10%
Know how to complete a jigsaw	77%	76%	78%
Know what to do in an emergency, e.g. phone the emergency services (999, 911)	20%	20%	21%
Digital skills			
Turn a computer on and off	63%	63%	63%
Know how to make a call on a mobile phone	28%	31%	25%
Know how to operate a computer mouse	69%	67%	71%
Play a basic online computer game	58%	54%	53%
Know how to open a web browser	25%	25%	25%
Know how to navigate between websites	16%	14%	18%
Know at least one email address	5%	5%	5%
Know at least one web address	15%	15%	15%
Can play with or operate at least one smartphone or iPad / tablet application	19%	20%	17%

Summary – There is no great difference between the tech skills of children with mothers over and under 35. However, older mothers appear marginally better in teaching their children life skills.

Life and Tech Skills -Boys and girls

Life skills			
Know how to ride a bike	52%	54%	52%
Know how to swim unaided	20%	20%	21%
Know their home address (street and no)	39%	38%	41%
Know how to make their own breakfast	27%	25%	31%
Can recognise their name when written	66%	66%	68%
Can write both his / her first and last name	37%	36%	40%
Can tie his / her own shoes unaided	11%	10%	13%
Know how to complete a jigsaw	77%	76%	78%
Know what to do in an emergency, e.g. phone the emergency services (999, 911)	20%	20%	20%
Digital skills			
Turn a computer on and off	63%	65%	61%
Know how to make a call on a mobile phone	28%	28%	29%
Know how to operate a computer mouse	69%	69%	69%
Play a basic online computer game	58%	58%	59%
Know how to open a web browser	25%	26%	25%
Know how to navigate between websites	16%	16%	16%
Know at least one email address	5%	5%	5%
Know at least one web address	15%	15%	15%
Can play with or operate at least one smartphone or tablet app	19%	19%	19%

Summary - There is no tech gender divide between young boys and girls. As many boys (58%) as girls (59%) can play a computer game or make a mobile phone call (28% boys, 29% girls)

Life and Tech Skills -By age of child

Life skills		Aged 2-3	Aged 4-5
Know how to ride a bike	52%	43%	67%
Know how to swim unaided	20%	15%	28%
Know their home address (street and no)	39%	29%	53%
Know how to make their own breakfast	27%	21%	35%
Can recognise their name when written	66%	53%	86%
Can write both his / her first and last name	37%	25%	58%
Can tie his / her own shoes unaided	11%	9%	14%
Know how to complete a jigsaw	77%	69%	88%
Know what to do in an emergency, e.g. phone the emergency services (999, 911)	20%	14%	31%
Digital skills			
Turn a computer on and off	63%	57%	68%
Know how to make a call on a mobile phone	28%	25%	32%
Know how to operate a computer mouse	69%	58%	82%
Play a basic online computer game	58%	44%	76%
Know how to open a web browser	25%	18%	34%
Know how to navigate between websites	16%	10%	23%
Know at least one email address	5%	4%	6%
Know at least one web address	15%	9%	22%
Can play with or operate at least one smartphone or iPad / tablet application	19%	17%	21%

Summary—Even very young children at 2-3 years old are starting to master tech skills. A quarter of 2-3 year olds know how to make a call on a mobile phone while 44% can play a computer game. By comparison only 15% can swim unaided and 43% can ride a bike.