Let Children Be Children

Online Child Safety:
African Insights

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Disclaimer

✓ Respondents have trusted us, been transparent, and shared potentially risky information. Please focus on the CONTENT and implications for the children and adolescents in Nigeria, South Sudan and Zambia.

✓ The minors and their parents provided us with this sensitive information with the intent of informing policy and any other interventions that can protect them from any online harm.

✓ The information in this presentation should not be utilised or stored for the purposes of republishing, reprinting, repurposing, or redistributing in any manner without the express prior consent of both Ipsos and MTN.

✓ Let us be responsible when using confidential information.

Let's meet with our Teammates │ The Ipsos team that executed the project

Marcus Hollington

Project Lead and Data Analyst

Client liaison, project management, methodology, data wrangling, analysis, and reporting, ethical application and clearances

Masechaba Phooko

Researcher and data analyst

Assisted with the analysis and reporting of the data.

Tukiya Mbewe

Project coordinator

Enumerator training, fieldwork management, stakeholder management, and reporting

Ezethu Nsiki

Project Supervisor

Oversaw the execution of the project and the quality of outputs and analysis.

Objectives | Main objectives

- Understand how access to the internet on digital devices facilitates the exploitation and abuse of children online.

- Identify which categories of children are at risk and how these risks materialise.

- Develop an evidence-based approach to curb online insecurity for children in all three cities and their countries at large.

Considerations │ Principle applied
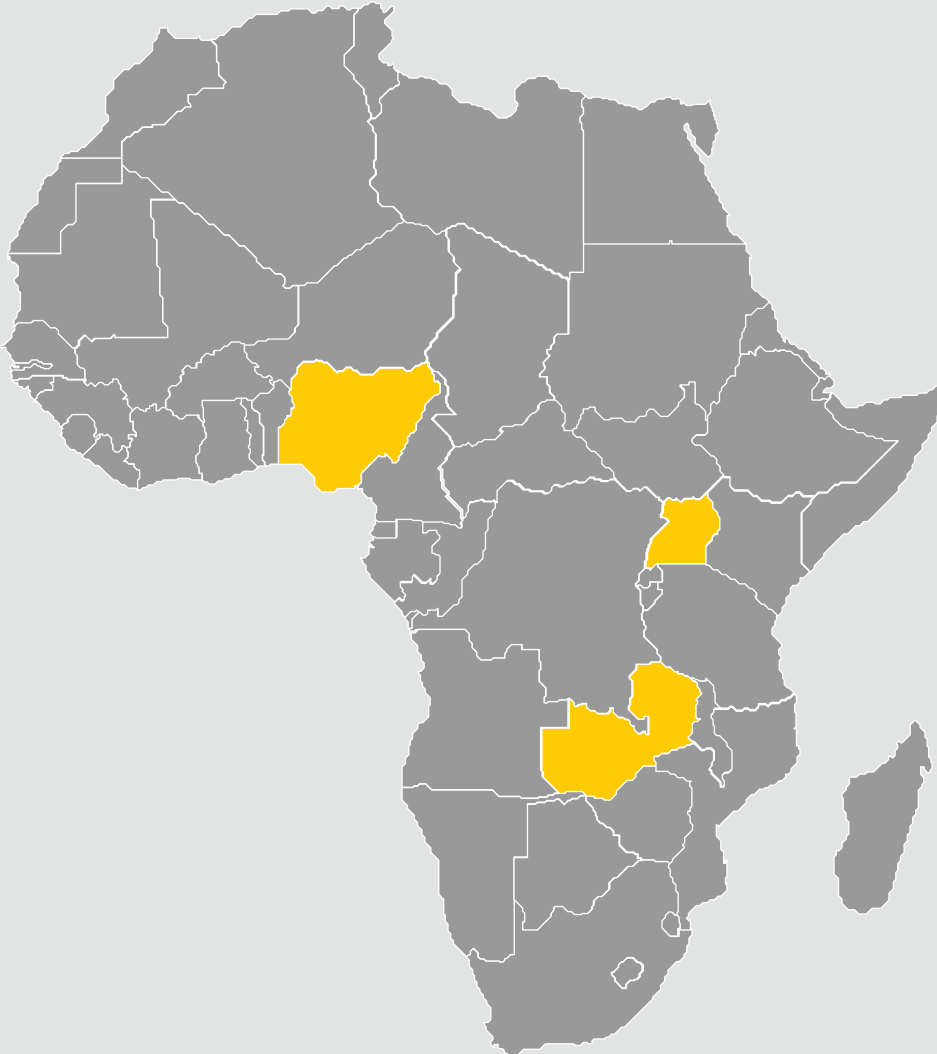
To enhance online child safety in Zambia (Lusaka), South Sudan (Juba), and Nigeria (Lagos).
The capital cities of these countries were chosen as research sites due to their urban nature and the expectation of a substantial number of children and adolescents having internet access and mobile devices. The findings from this study will serve as a basis for improving online child safety nationwide and give direction for the future in other provinces and or major cities to identify any regional differences.

Methodology across all Markets

Purposive sampling was utilised as it did not necessitate a sampling frame for participant selection, was cost-effective, and proved to be efficient in terms of time management.

Survey Methodology

Market	Zambia	South Sudan	Nigeria
Province/Region	Lusaka	Juba	Lagos
Methodology	CAPI (Face-to-Face) Purposive Sampling	CAPI (Face-to-Face) Purposive Sampling	CAPI (Face-to-Face) Purposive Sampling
Survey length	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
Survey language	English, Nyanja, and Bemba	English	English
Sample achieved	523	528	514
Fieldwork duration	3 Weeks	3 Weeks	3 Weeks

Target Respondent

Age: 8 – 17 years old.

Race: All ethnicities

Gender: Male and Female

Respondent Profile (n = 523) | Zambia

The infographics below provide the profiles of the children and adolescents that were interviewed in the study
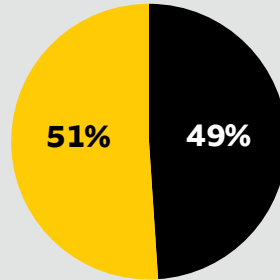
Gender

49% of the sample was **male**

51% of the sample was **female**

Age of respondents

51% 49%

- ■ 8 - 12 years
- ■ 13 - 17 years

Wi-Fi at home

97.71%

2.29%

Has internet at home   Does not have internet at home

Current level of learning

University	0%
College	0%
Secondary / High School	28%
Primary school	65%
Pre-school	1%
Not in school	6%

Has electricity at home

Has electricity at home: **97.71%**

Does not have electricity at home: **2.29%**
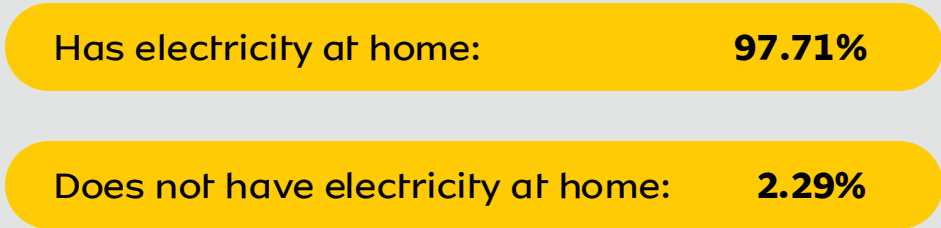
Respondent Profile (n = 528) | South Sudan

The infographics below provide the profiles of the children and adolescents that were interviewed in the study
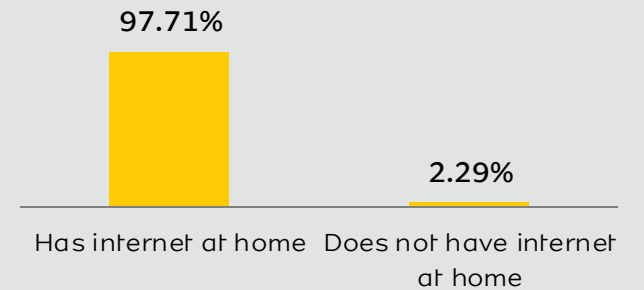
Gender

53% of the sample was **male**
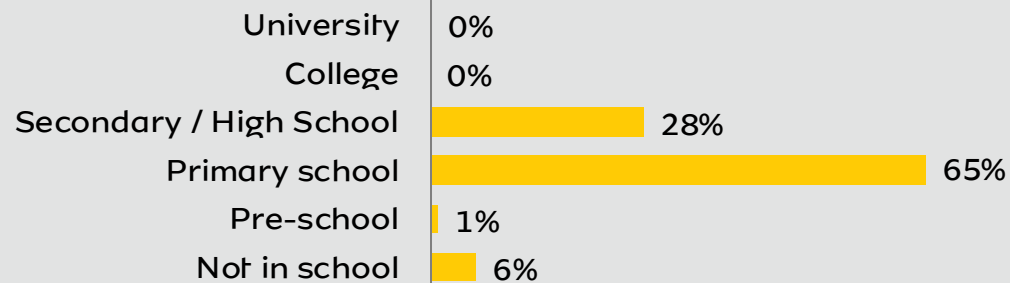
47% of the sample was **female**

Age of respondents

46%   54%

■ 8 - 12 years
■ 13 - 17 years

Wi-Fi at home

94.00%

6.00%

Has wifi at home   Does not have wifi at home

Current level of learning

University	0%
College	0%
Secondary / High School	28%
Primary school	67%
Pre-school	1%
Not in school	3%

Has electricity at home

Has electricity at home: **50.57%**

Does not have electricity at home: **49.43%**

Respondent Profile (n = 514) | Nigeria

The infographics below provide the profiles of the children and adolescents that were interviewed in the study
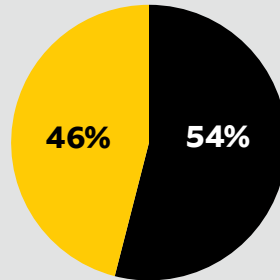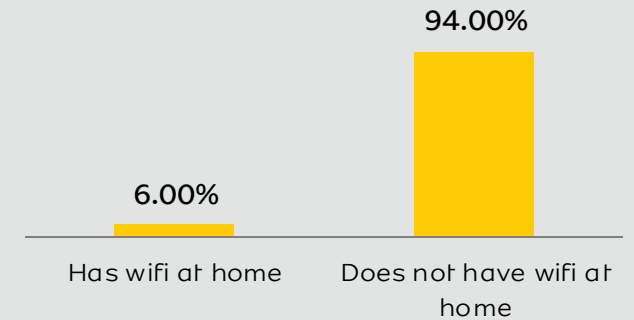
Gender

49% of the sample was **male**

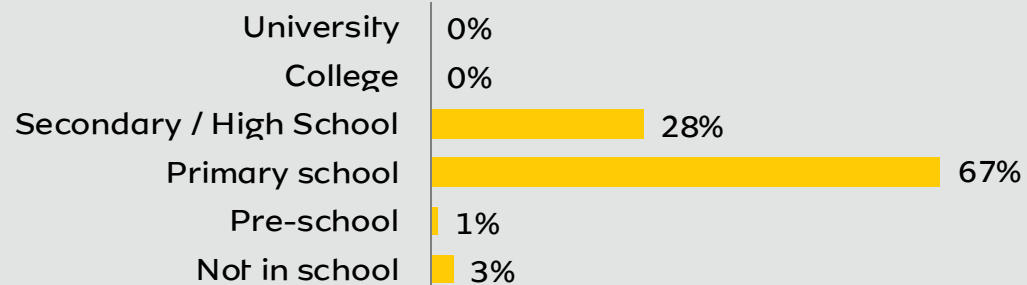**51%** of the sample was **female**

Age of respondents

49%   51%

■ 8 - 12 years
■ 13 - 17 years

Wi-Fi at home

95.00%

5.00%

Has wifi at home   Does not have wifi at home

Current level of learning

University	0%
College	2%
Secondary / High School	71%
Primary school	20%
Pre-school	0%
Not in school	6%
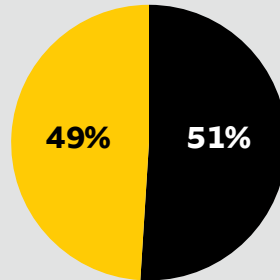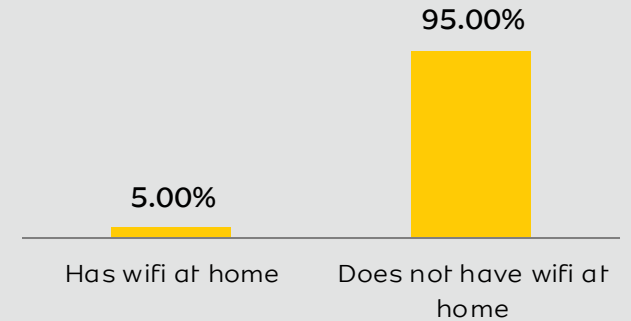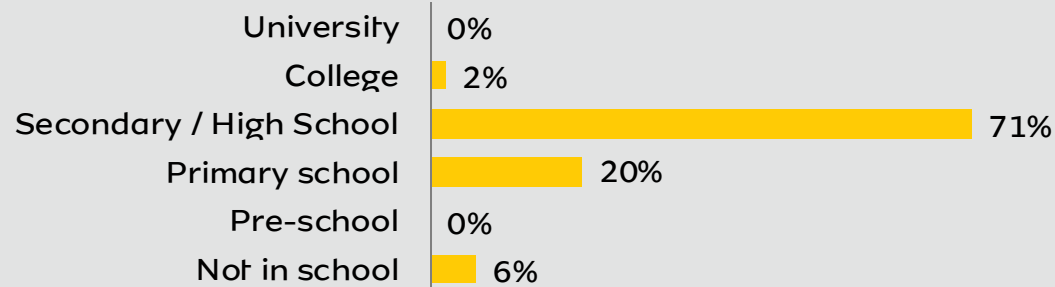
Has electricity at home

Has electricity at home: **99%**

Does not have electricity at home: **1%**

Ethical Considerations across all markets

Considering that the participants of the study were minors needing protection from any potential harm, applications for ethical clearances were submitted and granted by the National Health Research Authority in Lusaka (Zambia), the National Communication Authority in Juba (South Sudan), and the Nigeria Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC)

Zambia   **South Sudan**   **Nigeria**

Key Findings

Sources of Internet access and security concerns | Overview

Lagos   : Mainly through parent's phones, mobile data bundles, and school

Juba   : Primarily via mobile data bundles, parents' phones and school

Lusaka : Mostly from home, through parents' phones and mobile data bundles

Security concerns	Zambia (Lusaka)	South Sudan (Juba)	Nigeria (Lagos)
Children being harassed online aged – 8 to 17 years old	1 in 20 or 5%	1 in 10 or 10%	1 in 10 or 10%
Children being bullied online aged – 8 to 17 years old	1 in 20 or 5%	2 in 10 children or 20%	1 in 20 or 5%
High internet use (1 hour or more) among adolescents – 13 to17 years old	49%	49%	79%
Adding strangers to instant messenger list – 13 to 17 years old	3 in 10 or 30%	3 in 10 or 30%	4 in 10 or 30%
Sexual conversations – 13 to 17 years	1 in 10 or 10%	1 in 10 or 10%	1 in 10 or 10%

Social media platforms where children are mostly harassed and or bullied

Sources of Internet access and security concerns | Overview

Lagos   : Mainly through parent's phones, mobile data bundles, and school

Juba   : Primarily via mobile data bundles, parents' phones and school

Lusaka : Mostly from home, through parents' phones and mobile data bundles

Met people in person previously met online

Percentage affected

13 – 17 years

8 – 12 years

	Lusaka	Juba	Lagos
■ 8 – 12 years	14%	35%	7%
■ 13 – 17 years	33%	54%	56%
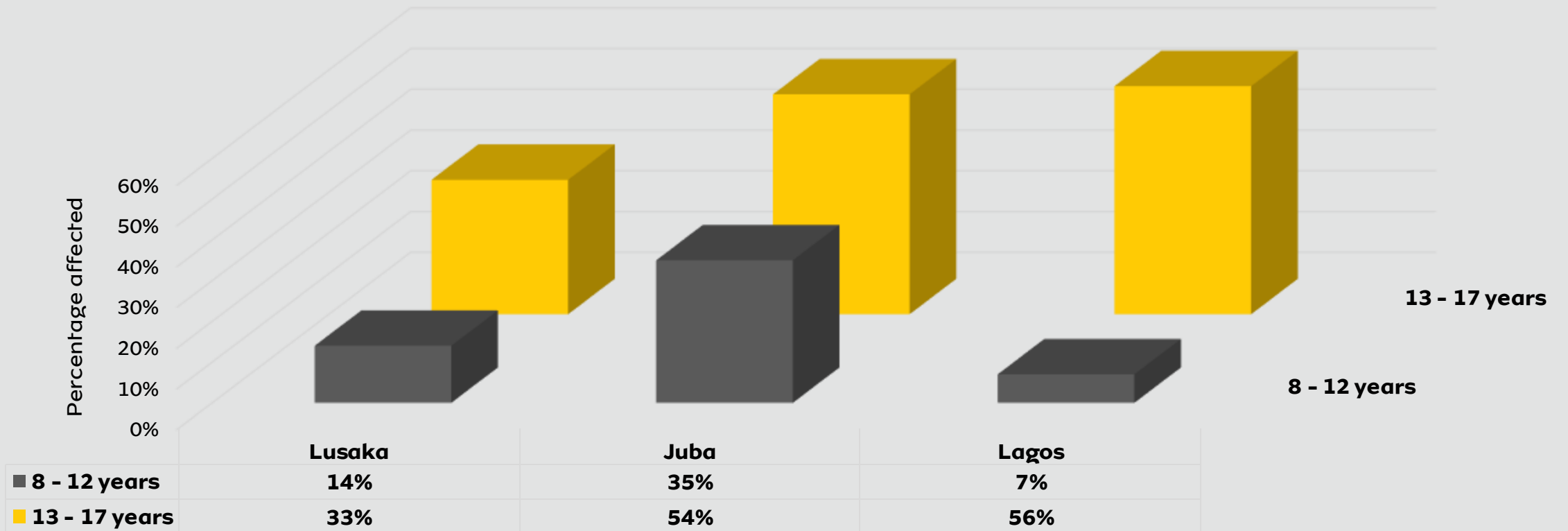
Predicting the drivers of risky online behaviour among kids │ Profiling children at risk : Lusaka

Adolescents aged 13 – 17 were almost 5x more likely to engage in ROB compared to younger adolescents aged 8 – 12.

Adolescents in secondary/high school are almost 7x more likely to engage in ROB compared to children and adolescents in pre-school and primary school.

Children and adolescents who use the internet weekly are significantly less likely to engage in ROB compared to children and adolescents who use the internet daily.

Children and adolescents who have never been harassed online are significantly less likely to engage in ROB .

Children and adolescents who have never been bullied and abused online are significantly less likely to engage in ROB
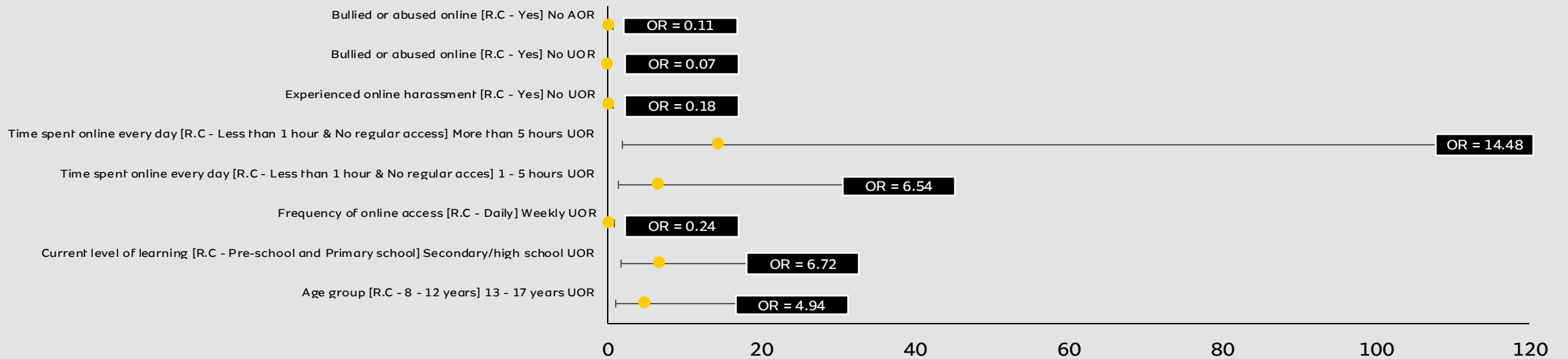
Category	OR
Bullied or abused online [R.C - Yes] No AOR	OR = 0.11
Bullied or abused online [R.C - Yes] No UOR	OR = 0.07
Experienced online harassment [R.C - Yes] No UOR	OR = 0.18
Time spent online every day [R.C - Less than 1 hour & No regular access] More than 5 hours UOR	OR = 14.48
Time spent online every day [R.C - Less than 1 hour & No regular acces] 1 - 5 hours UOR	OR = 6.54
Frequency of online access [R.C - Daily] Weekly UOR	OR = 0.24
Current level of learning [R.C - Pre-school and Primary school] Secondary/high school UOR	OR = 6.72
Age group [R.C - 8 - 12 years] 13 - 17 years UOR	OR = 4.94

0   20   40   60   80   100   120

Predicting the drivers of risky online behaviour among kids │ Profiling children at risk : Juba

Children and adolescents aged 8 – 17 years who use the internet for an hour or more are at a disproportionate risk of engaging in ROB with a likelihood of almost **13x** in the unadjusted model and almost **17x** in the adjusted model.

ROB among children who spend 1 hour or more daily on the internet
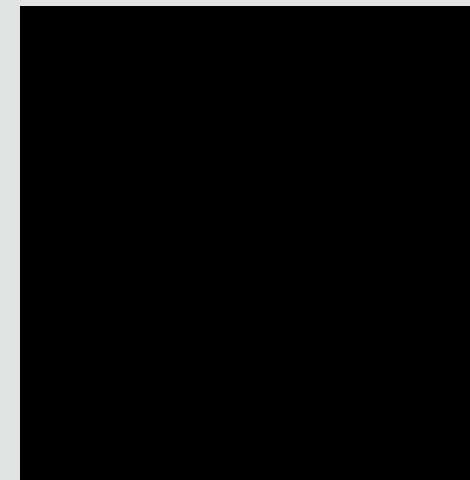
■ **Unadjusted odds ratio**   ■ **Adjusted odds ratio**

12.55   **16.87**

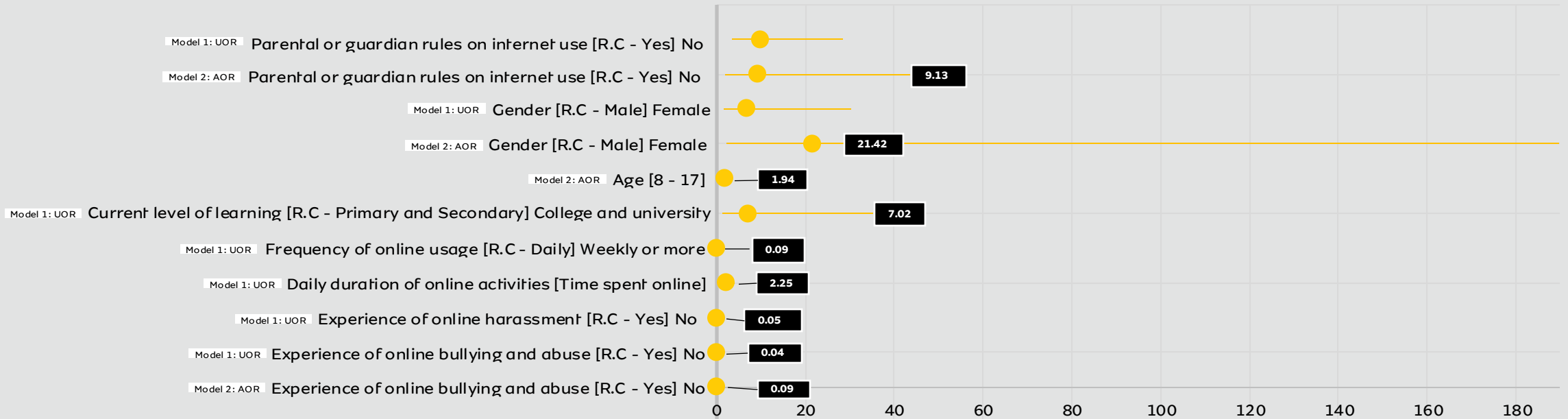**Unadjusted odds ratio**   **Adjusted odds ratio**

Predicting the drivers of risky online behaviour among kids | Profiling children at risk : Nigeria

Children whose parents or guardians whose parents do not have rules on internet use are significantly more (9 – 10x) likely to engage in ROB.

Female children are significantly more likely (6.79 - 21.42x) to engage in ROB compared to male children.

Children who use the internet weekly or fewer times are significantly less likely to engage in ROB compared to children who use the internet daily.

Children who have not been harassed, bullied, or abused online are significantly less likely to engage in ROB.

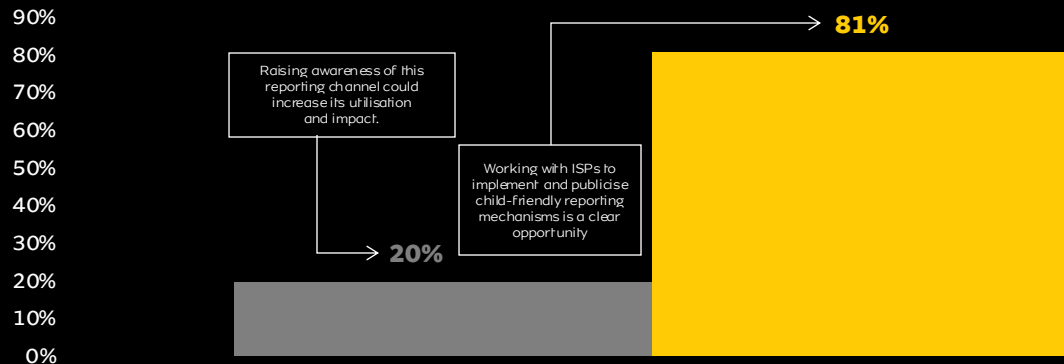|	Value
Model 1: UOR Parental or guardian rules on internet use [R.C - Yes] No	
Model 2: AOR Parental or guardian rules on internet use [R.C - Yes] No	9.13
Model 1: UOR Gender [R.C - Male] Female	
Model 2: AOR Gender [R.C - Male] Female	21.42
Model 2: AOR Age [8 - 17]	1.94
Model 1: UOR Current level of learning [R.C - Primary and Secondary] College and university	7.02
Model 1: UOR Frequency of online usage [R.C - Daily] Weekly or more	0.09
Model 1: UOR Daily duration of online activities [Time spent online]	2.25
Model 1: UOR Experience of online harassment [R.C - Yes] No	0.05
Model 1: UOR Experience of online bullying and abuse [R.C - Yes] No	0.04
Model 2: AOR Experience of online bullying and abuse [R.C - Yes] No	0.09

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160   180

The low-hanging fruit | Zambia

Let's zone into the low-hanging fruit to protect children in Lusaka

- Facebook and WhatsApp are significantly associated with online harassment and bullying among children in Lusaka. Focusing safety efforts and education on these popular platforms could have an outsized impact.

- Older teens aged 13-17, especially males, are engaging in much riskier online behaviors like adding strangers to messenger lists, meeting online acquaintances in person, and sharing personal information. Targeting online safety education and outreach to this demographic could mitigate substantial risks.
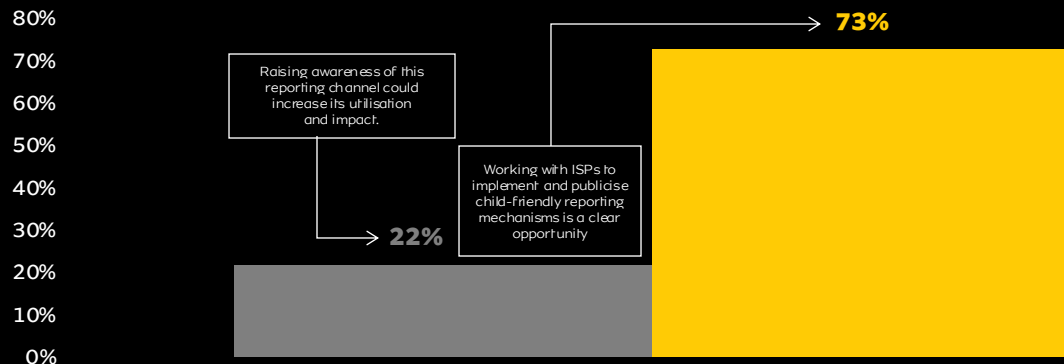

81%

Raising awareness of this reporting channel could increase its utilisation and impact.

Working with ISPs to implement and publicise child-friendly reporting mechanisms is a clear opportunity

20%

90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

■ Aware of existing online child protection portal

■ Want service providers to allow children to report cyberbullying and abuse to them

The low-hanging fruit | South Sudan

Let's zone into the low-hanging fruit to protect children in Juba

- Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram are significantly associated with online harassment among children in Juba. Focusing safety efforts and education on these popular platforms could have an outsized impact.

- Adolescents aged 13-17, especially males, are engaging in much riskier online behaviors like adding strangers to messenger lists, meeting online acquaintances in person, and sharing personal information. Targeting online safety education and outreach to this demographic could mitigate substantial risks.
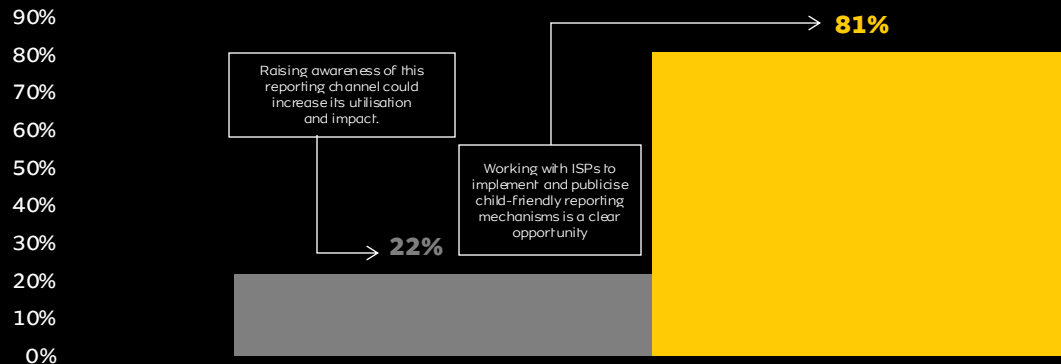
Raising awareness of this reporting channel could increase its utilisation and impact.

Working with ISPs to implement and publicise child-friendly reporting mechanisms is a clear opportunity

73%

22%

■ Aware of existing online child protection portal

■ Want service providers to allow children to report cyberbullying and abuse to them

The low-hanging fruit | South Sudan

Let's zone into the low-hanging fruit to protect children in Lagos

- Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Gmail, Chat sites, and TikTok are significantly associated with online harassment among children in Lagos. Focusing safety efforts and education on these popular platforms could have an outsized impact.

- Adolescents aged 13-17, especially females, are engaging in much riskier online behaviors like adding strangers to messenger lists, meeting online acquaintances in person, and sharing personal information. Targeting online safety education and outreach to this demographic could mitigate substantial risks.

- Parental engagement appears crucial, as children whose parents had no internet rules were 9-10 times more likely to engage in risky online behavior compared to children and adolescents whose parents have rules on internet use in place. Empowering parents with knowledge and tools to set boundaries is low-hanging fruit.

81%

Raising awareness of this reporting channel could increase its utilisation and impact.

Working with ISPs to implement and publicise child-friendly reporting mechanisms is a clear opportunity

22%

90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

■ Aware of existing online child protection portal

■ Want service providers to allow children to report cyberbullying and abuse to them

Recommendations

Protecting Children And Adolescents From Online Harm

Strengthen Legal Frameworks

- Develop and enforce comprehensive laws targeting individuals who exploit or abuse children online.
- Establish a legal age of digital consent to protect minors from data exploitation.

Enhance Parental and Guardian Engagement

- Provide training programs for parents and guardians on internet safety and the operation of social networking sites.
- Encourage regular and open discussions between children and their parents/guardians about online activities and safety.

Improve Educational Programs

- Implement education programs in schools to inform children about the consequences of their internet use and the risks of sharing personal information.

Increase Accessibility of Reporting Mechanisms

- Ensure that internet service providers offer accessible features to report cyberbullying and abuse.
- Raise awareness of existing online child protection portals where incidents can be reported.

Promote Safer Internet Usage

- Restrict access to certain harmful websites and monitor usage to prevent misuse and abuse.
- Advocate for the use of "report abuse" buttons and enhance their effectiveness in providing protection.
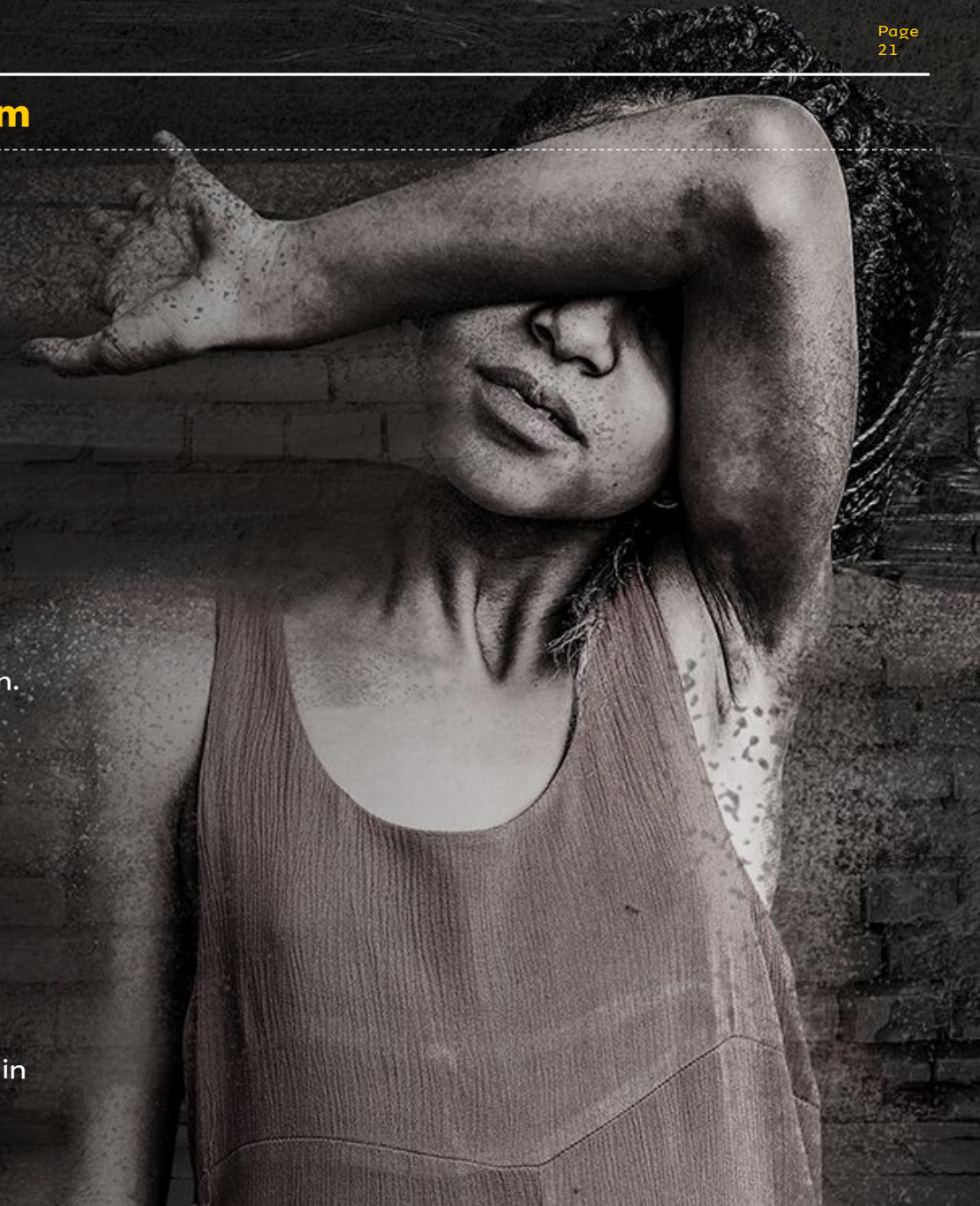
Protecting Children And Adolescents From Online Harm

Provide Support Services

- Create readily available psychosocial support systems for victims of online harassment or bullying.
- Establish call centers to receive reports of online threats or abuse in both emergency and non-emergency situations.

Foster a Culture of Openness and Support

- Encourage children to seek help from trusted individuals when feeling threatened online.
- Promote an environment where children feel comfortable discussing their online experiences without fear of judgment or retribution.

Address Online Content and Behaviour

- Monitor and manage the types of content that minors can access, focusing on entertainment, news, and educational sources.
- Educate about the dangers of engaging with strangers online and the risks of meeting online acquaintances in person.

Collaborate with Stakeholders

- Involve government agencies, NGOs, schools, and community leaders in developing and implementing online safety initiatives.
- Create partnerships with tech companies to improve the safety features of their platforms for minors.

Evaluate and Adapt Strategies

- Continuously assess the impact of implemented safety measures and adapt strategies according to the evolving digital landscape.
- Encourage ongoing research to identify new threats and develop innovative solutions to protect children and adolescents online.