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Dialogue conference "Data protection for children": Greater consideration of children's concerns

Under the motto "I see data that you don't see..." adults and children discussed how effective data protection can be achieved in the age of digitization, especially for children and young people.

On July 3, 2018, the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (BfDI), Andrea Voßhoff, together with the association Deutschlandsicher im Netz e. V. (DsiN) and its project DigiBits (digital education meets school), the professional association of data protection officers in Germany e.V. (BvD) with its initiative "Data protection goes to school" and the institute for media research and media education at the Technical University of Cologne around 200 participants exchanged views on the role that data protection plays for children when dealing with digital media and on which points there is still room for improvement.

It is particularly important to me to find out directly from young people how they think about the topic of data protection in connection with the media they use on a daily basis and what is important from their point of view. In this way, Andrea Voßhoff described the impetus and motivation for organizing a conference that, in the format presented, represents a novelty for the BfDI.

In her summary of the results of the conference, Andrea Voßhoff summed it up:

When teaching digital skills in education and teaching, data protection for children should be a central issue. However, this issue should not be imposed on schools alone. The educational environment of children and young people must also be more involved and educated in order to prepare children for the risks of the new digital world and to sensitize them to the protection of their own data.

As a society, we have to be aware that "digital education" does not just mean the equipment in schools, but also the ability to handle one's own data and information about others responsibly, adds Rudi Kramer from the "Data protection goes to school" initiative " of the BvD.

As in many other subject areas directly related to children, the subject of data protection is usually only discussed about those affected and not with them. Today's event in the Lower Saxony State Representation in Berlin, which was attended by around 70 children, proved that there is another way.

With the support of DsiN and BvD, two Berlin elementary school classes prepared for the conference topics and presented their results in a forum for discussion with experts and the participants. Schoolchildren who were awarded the myDigitalWorld school prize last year were also represented in the two expert panels. Children are already entitled to school lessons that teach digital skills in subject lessons. It's about education and enthusiasm for responsible use of digital media. For teachers and schools in particular, tried and tested concepts such as DigiBitS - digital education meets school - are therefore essential, explained Michael Littger (DsiN) in the opening panel at the conference.

Moderated by the experienced TV presenter Ralph Caspers, the focus of the conference was on the dialogue between the children and the invited experts. Prof. Dr. Friederike Siller from the Cologne University of Applied Sciences stated: Children have the right to use digital media to communicate, to obtain information and to express their opinion. If you want to support children, you have to understand the reality of children's lives and start from there. Data protection can be a strong partner alongside children to ensure their rights. I am therefore pleased that children and young people also formulated their ideas, wishes and concerns clearly and self-confidently in the discussion and that the dialogue was not conducted past them, but with them.

Even if this conference was only able to briefly highlight the problem, the BfDI has formulated some recommendations from the findings in order to improve data protection for children when dealing with digital media. The recommendations are summarized in the annex to this press release.

publications

Recommendations of the Federal Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information for child-friendly data protection when dealing with digital media offerings (PDF, 11KB, file is not barrier-free)

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