

The impact of online marketing on children's behaviour

Children are increasingly exposed to marketing online. Online games, applications and social media sites are all used to attract Europe's young consumers.

A European Commission study examined the impact of online marketing on children's behaviour.

How children are targeted in online games

Ab *Advergame: an online video game that promotes a particular brand, product or marketing message by integrating it into the game.*

Application (app) game: a game developed as an application for mobile devices.

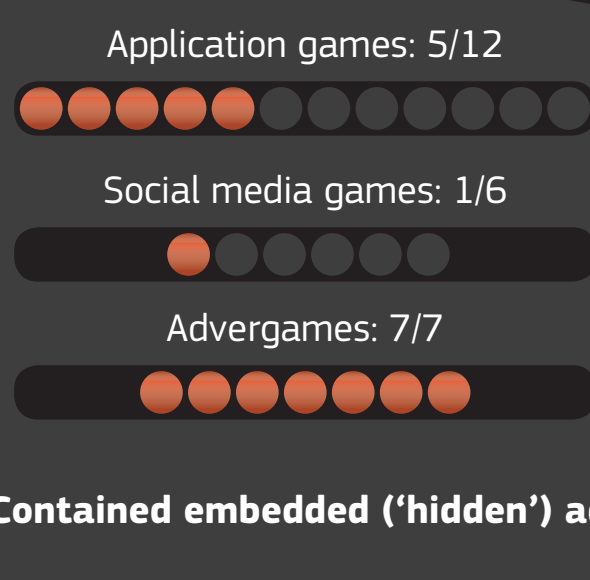
Contextual ads



Embedded ads and product placement

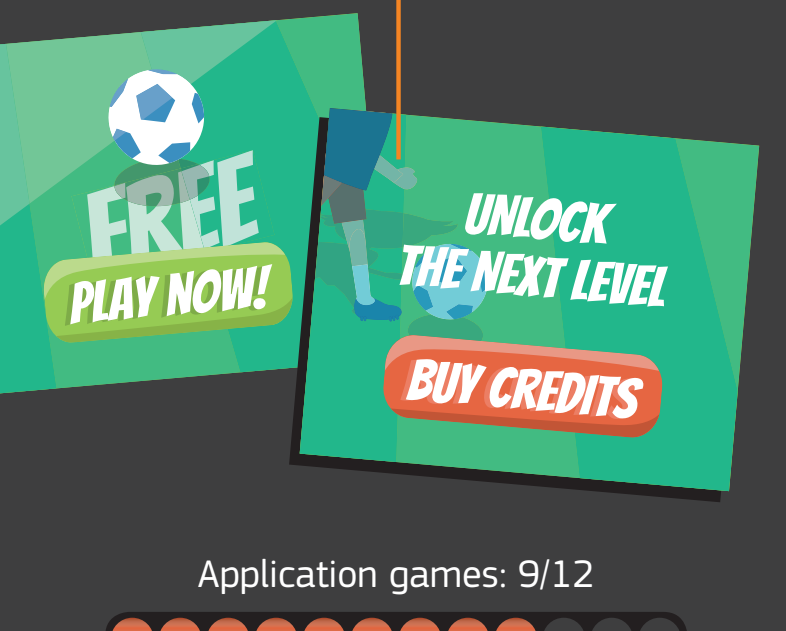


Contained contextual ads



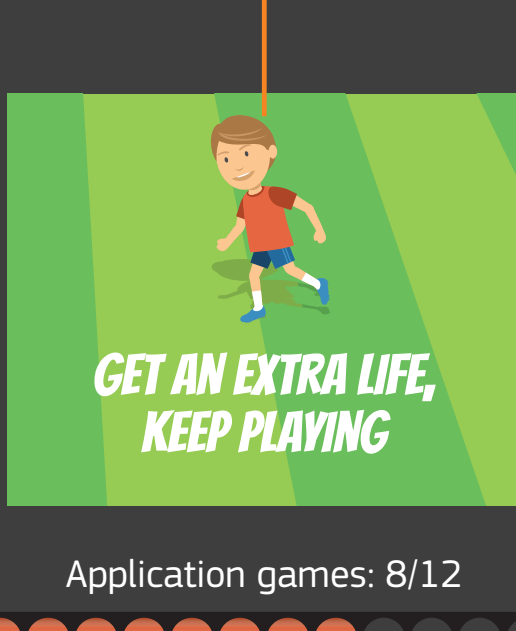
Contained embedded ('hidden') ads

In-app purchases



Contained In-app purchases

Prompts to extend gameplay



Contained inducements to keep playing

What are the effects

Two behavioural experiments with children were conducted as part of this study. One investigated the effects of being exposed to embedded advertisements in games and the other investigated the effects of being exposed to prompts to make In-app purchases.

Advergames

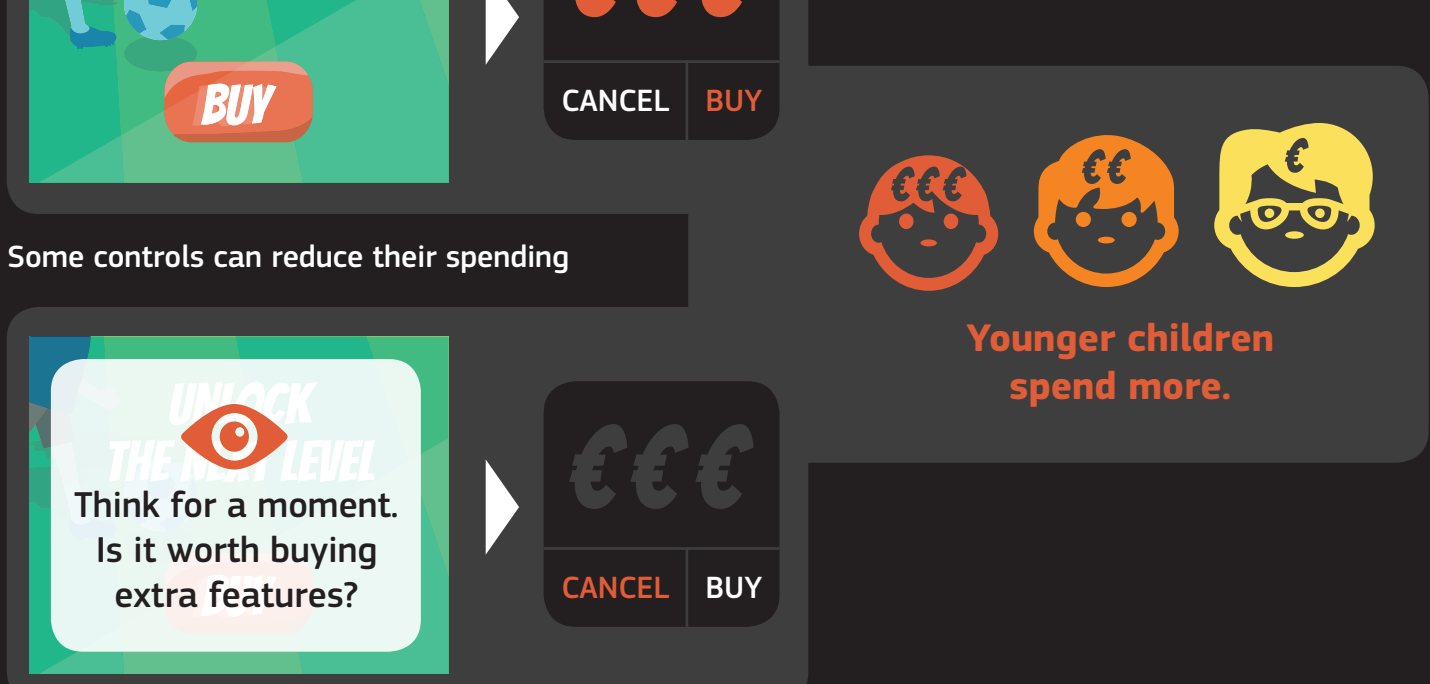
Advertisements in online games has an impact on children's behaviour



Advergames can lead to a **SUBCONSCIOUS** change in children's behaviour.

In-app purchases

Children are vulnerable to prompts to make In-app purchases

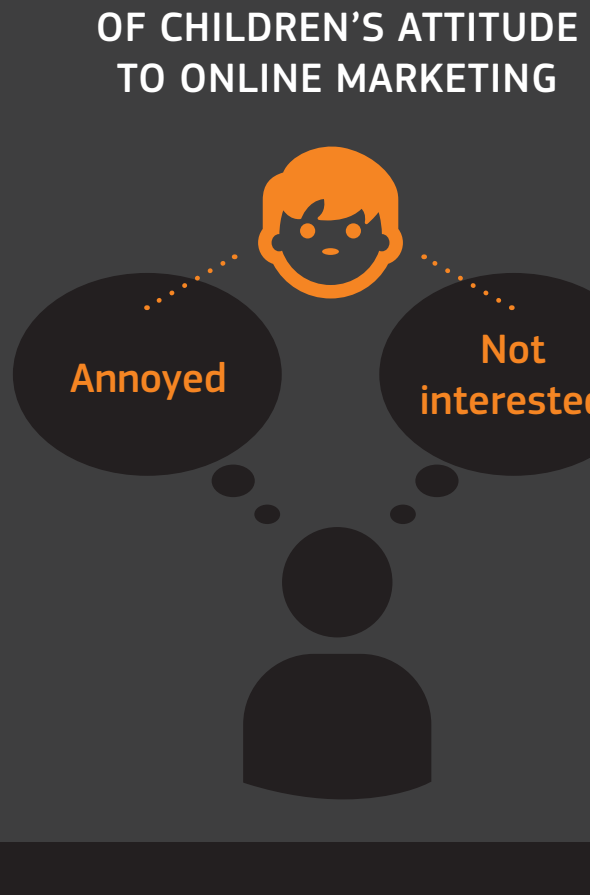


Online protection

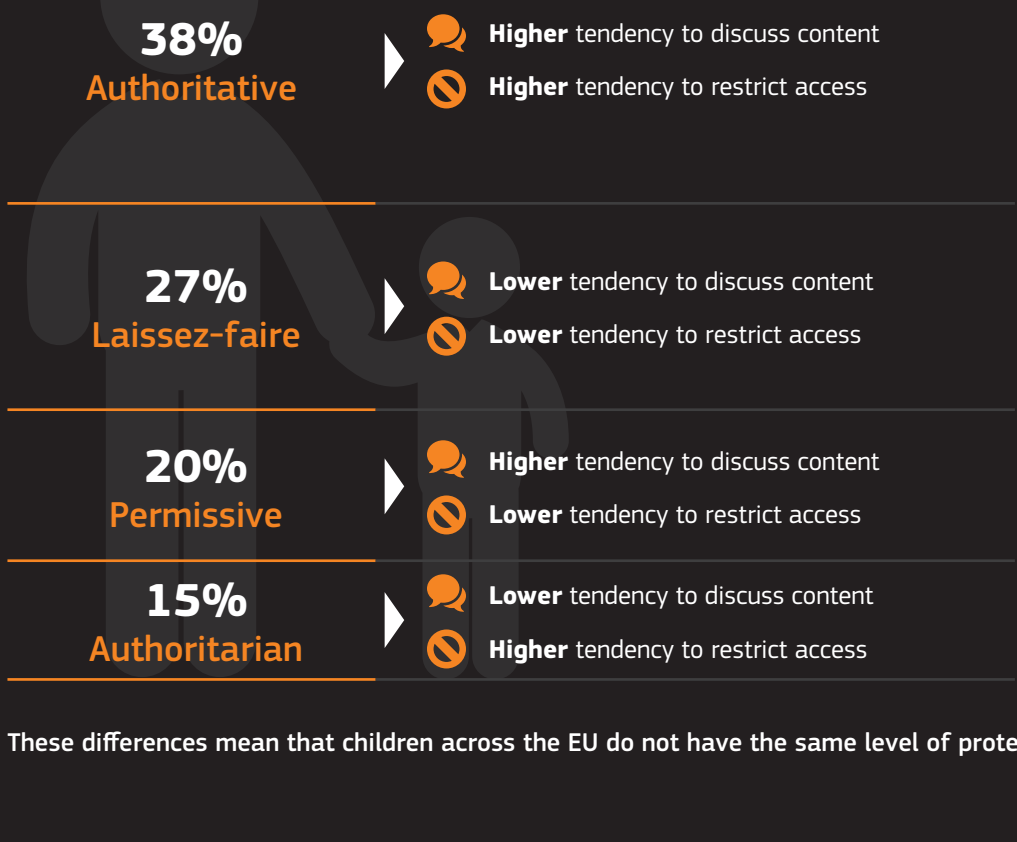
Parents have an important role to play in moderating their children's behaviour online, but they are not always aware of all the risks.

Parents' concerns about children's activities online

- MAIN CONCERNS**
- Violent images
- Online buying
- Data tracking
- Digital identity theft
- Ads for unhealthy lifestyle
- Ads for unhealthy foods
- Targeted ads
- Hidden ads
- Prompts to make In-app purchases



Parents in different countries have different approaches to monitoring their children's activities online. The results below show tendencies in the 8 EU countries studied.



These differences mean that children across the EU do not have the same level of protection against online marketing.

The study analysed the impact of online marketing through an in-depth analysis of games, behavioural experiments, focus groups, surveys as well as a literature review and a regulatory review. See the full study online.

