

## Partners

The quantitative log file analyses will be conducted with the cooperation of the providers of the children's search engines "Blinde Kuh", "fragFinn" and "Helles Köpfchen"; the participatory observations with the children's editorial departments of jugendschutz.net, Mainz and SIN - Studio im Netz, Munich.

The representative data about search engine use will be made available by the "Media Education Research Group Southwest" (mpfs) as part of the "KIM Study 2010".

## Contact

Dr. Christine Feil  
phone: +49-(0)89/ 62306-172  
fax: +49-(0)89/ 62306-407  
e-mail: feil@dji.de

Christoph Gieger  
phone: +49-(0)89/ 62306-131  
fax: +49-(0)89/ 62306-407  
e-mail: gieger@dji.de

Alexander Grobbin  
phone: +49-(0)89/ 62306-146  
fax: +49-(0)89/ 62306-407  
e-mail: grobbin@dji.de

sponsored by:



Funding will be provided by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBWF) and the European Union's European Social Fund (ESF).

## Publications



**Christine Feil, Christoph Gieger,  
Holger Quellenberg**  
**Lernen mit dem Internet.  
Beobachtungen und Befragungen  
in der Grundschule**

[Learning with the Internet. Observations and interviews in primary school; in German]  
Verlag Sozialwissenschaften  
Wiesbaden 2009  
ISBN 3-531-15555-5; € 24,90



**Christine Feil, Regina Decker,  
Christoph Gieger**  
**Wie entdecken Kinder das  
Internet?  
Beobachtungen  
bei 5- bis 12-jährigen Kindern**

[How children learn to know the Internet. Findings from observations of children aged 5 to 12; in German]  
Verlag Sozialwissenschaften  
Wiesbaden 2004  
ISBN 3-8100-4227-7; € 22,90



**Wir sind drin. Kinder im Internet.  
Ein Film in acht Begegnungen**  
[We are in the Internet. Children surfing the world wide web. A film in eight scenes; in German]

**by Otto Schweitzer**

© DJI München 2003  
Reihe „Wissen und Bindung“  
45 minutes, € 23,50  
To be ordered from feil@dji.de

15.06.2010

**Contact:**  
Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V  
Nockherstr. 2  
D-81541 Munich  
Tel.: +49-(0)89-62306-0  
Fax: +49-(0)89-62306-407  
<http://www.dji.de>

## The Information-Seeking Behaviour of Children Online

### An Empirical Study of Search Engine Use

<http://www.dji.de/www-kinderseiten/898>

For information about other DJI Internet projects, please see: <http://www.dji.de/www-kinderseiten/>

- Digital Divide. Digital Competency in Childhood
- Learning with the Internet: Observations made in elementary-school setting
- How do Children Learn to Know the Internet? A Qualitative Study on Acquiring Internet Competencies

## Open Questions

The main areas of the study rest on the following questions:

- Which children are using children's search engines? Which are using general search engines?
- How are the range of children's search engines designed, and how are they to be evaluated from the point of view of media pedagogy?
- What are children looking for? How do they behave when using search engines? How do they handle the search tools?
- What does the search engine technology and logic demand of children and what do children already need to know in order to successfully use the engines?
- How do children evaluate their searches when using children's search engines and general search engines? When judging, do they consider their own search behaviour, the search results and the information content of the results?
- Can children's search engines satisfy children's search interests and do the engines' particular results contribute decisively to the spread of knowledge?
- Are the information needs and research aims of girls and boys, especially during the transition from pre-puberty to puberty, limited by the selected offerings of the children's search engines? And, if so, does this prompt a migration to the "insecure", general search engines?

## Objective

For children, the Internet has become an important source of information. It is used in addition to, but also instead of traditional print media. Without the use of a search engine, however, it isn't possible to use the Internet for research purposes. For this reason, access to the web's collected knowledge depends on the individual's ability to successfully use search tools, and to select and interpret information. In view of this, to what extent is an active media pedagogy asked to open itself up more to the exchange of technological knowledge, and to support children's information literacy?

The online informational needs and search strategies of children between the ages of six and thirteen will be investigated, in particular with regard to children's search engines. Because many children also conduct research with general search engines, which have been designed for adults, an additional analysis will be made as to whether or not the children's information-seeking behaviour differs in such cases, and to what extent the choice of search engine is influenced by particular interests or the social environment. Given the assumption that online texts and search results are selectively received, attention also needs to be paid to whether or not the research techniques and selection of information influence the children's reading behaviour, and thus how they take the information in.

Planned is the working out of basic principles for the development of media-pedagogical guides concerning the use of search engines, and for the support of children's information literacy.

## Methods

In the study both quantitative and qualitative survey methods will be used:

### Supply Analyses

Description of children's search engines in the German language and evaluation of the contents. Specialist discussions with selected children's search engine providers: "Blinde Kuh", "fragFinn" and "Helles Köpfchen".

### Group Interviews

Conversations with children aged six to thirteen about their research experiences and their search engine preferences.

### Log File-Analyses

Quantitative analysis of the queries and research behaviour of children using children's search engines.

### Quantitative Interviews

Online interviews of the "target group children" on the selected children's search engines. Survey of representative reference data concerning children's search engine use together with the "Media Education Research Group Southwest" (mpfs).

### Participatory Observations

Conducting of Internet research with children using children's search engines, but also using general search engines (control group). In doing so, the usability of the search engine from a child's point of view will be taken into account.