

Press release

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Help and advice for consumers in Europe
European Consumer Centres Network


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Consumer rights: How much do you know? ECC-Net provides free teaching materials

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net) sees an alarming increase of young children and teenagers getting involved in digital consumer rights struggles. Whether through dubious offers in online sweepstakes, online games or social media: young internet users spend money without meaning to or share personal data that could potentially be abused. With parents seeking legal assistance at local European Consumer Centres, ECC-Net now launches a set of free teaching materials to help teach children and teenagers about online risks.

In support of the European Year of Youth 2022, the educational project provides learning tools for all young Europeans. According to a study by online identity-verification service Social Catfish, teenagers are falling victim to dubious online practices faster than their grandparents. This trend is only increasing. Although they are tech-savvy, growing up online and spending more time on the internet has made under-20-year-olds less critical of their digital surroundings.

Children in cost traps: an example

Victor (13 years old) purchased virtual currency in order to upgrade his 'ultimate' soccer team on his internet-connected gaming console. Caught up in a repeated play rush, Victor ends up accidentally spending €90 per ninety seconds. Although Victor did not know his mother's password for in-app purchases, this had been auto-saved to his console from an earlier purchase. The total of Victor's soccer team bill amounted to €4069.71.

Fortunately, one of our centres was able to prevent drastic financial damage for Victor's mother by mediating with the trader. However, the shock Victor's mother must have had is no exception. The European Consumer Centres Network frequently sees other cases like this, sometimes involving children as young as 6 years old.

Our teaching tools

To tackle this trend, ECC-Net has prepared several English language teaching tools. These are freely available to teachers as well as parents. The language difficulty sets the material to be useful to children and teenagers who have between 2 and 5 years of experience studying English. The kit comes with an instruction manual and is available from <https://www.eccnet.eu/consumer-education>. The kit includes:

- **Video**

This [animated video](#) shows children who are encountering difficult situations when playing mobile games. The clip targets younger children by using easier language and encouraging discussion. It can be used separately or in combination with the quiz.

- **Quiz**

The trivia quiz portrays underage online consumers in unwelcome situations, that participants try to avoid by picking the correct answers. The quiz covers digital rights, gaming, e-commerce, and traps on social platforms and is aimed at slightly older and more advanced learners of English. It can be taken [online](#) or [downloaded](#) for print.

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Press contact:

Contact your [local European Consumer Centre](#) for more information.