



2.

Safety and security

Glasgow



What we did

In Glasgow, the AI Team worked with Digital Skills Education (DSE), a technology education company, to explore themes of privacy and security. DSE were interested in the children's insights into a new resource exploring data security and privacy. The resource was designed to look at 'de-anonymising datasets' and encouraged the children to identify patterns of data that could be used by companies to profile them. Children's Parliament co-facilitated the day with activities that explored broader questions around children's data and privacy.

DSE's engagement was followed the next day by a workshop co-designed with local artist Zeo Fawcett. Zeo used rotoscoping animation techniques to further explore the children's feelings about their data security and privacy in relation to themes from the day before.



What the children told us

"We should have the right to privacy. You need to be careful about what you share online about me."

Member of Children's Parliament, Glasgow

The children discussed how using their data in AI systems can affect their right to privacy. Children's Parliament ran an activity that encouraged the children to think about which types of data (name, age, medical information etc.) they would feel comfortable sharing publicly, with those close to them, or keeping completely private. Members of Children's Parliament spoke about how sharing certain types of data made them feel and how this affects their right to privacy.

"Don't share my location, that is very important."

Member of Children's Parliament, Glasgow

When completing an activity with DSE that asked the children to de-anonymise datasets, they discussed the pros and cons of personalised services in relation to their data. Children expressed feeling shocked at the amount of personal data that can be gathered, and how easily this can be used to identify and profile users of a service. When learning that data could be shared with other companies and actors, conversations centered on matters of safety, use and consent.

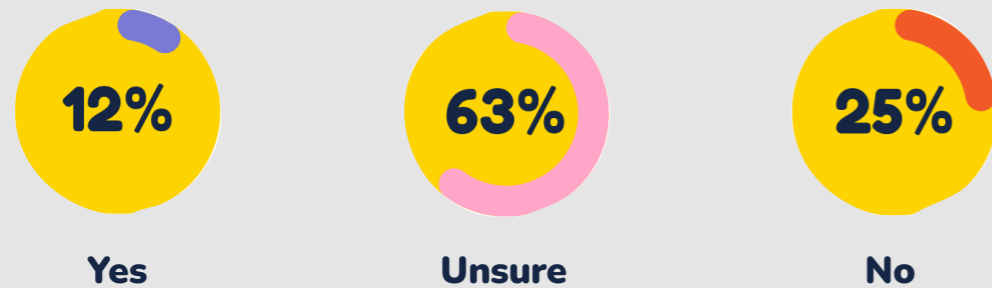
"It made us really confused that so many companies can have your data."

Member of Children's Parliament, Glasgow

Image (opposite): Members of Children's Parliament engage in a workshop activity.

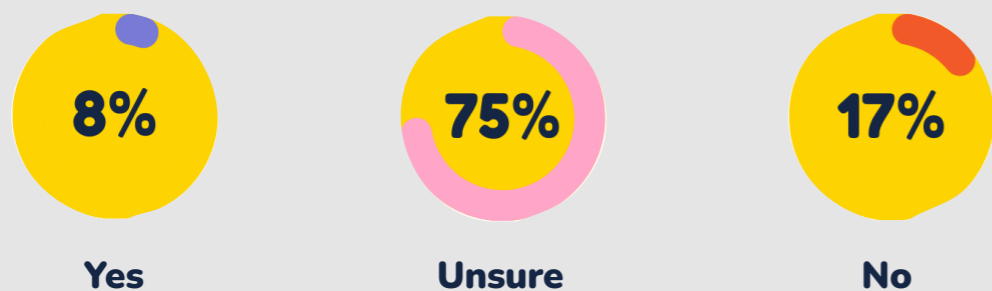
Over half the group was unsure if they were happy with companies collecting data about how they use apps and websites, saying **“sometimes the data collected makes good recommendations, other times not”** (Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow). One quarter of the group felt unhappy with this, worried that the data they provide to the company will be **“permanently there”**. (Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow).

I am happy with the companies that make the websites and apps I use collecting data about how I use them.



Similarly, three quarters of the group felt unsure about websites and apps gathering personal data, saying **“some apps need to know your age”** (Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow) and discussing how this differs depending on the type of service. A small percentage of the group were unconcerned by this kind of data collection while the rest felt uncomfortable with it, referring also to their right to privacy. The majority were also unhappy with the idea of companies sharing their data for AI recommendation and personalisation systems.

I am happy that websites and apps gather personal data like my name, DOB, and so on about me.

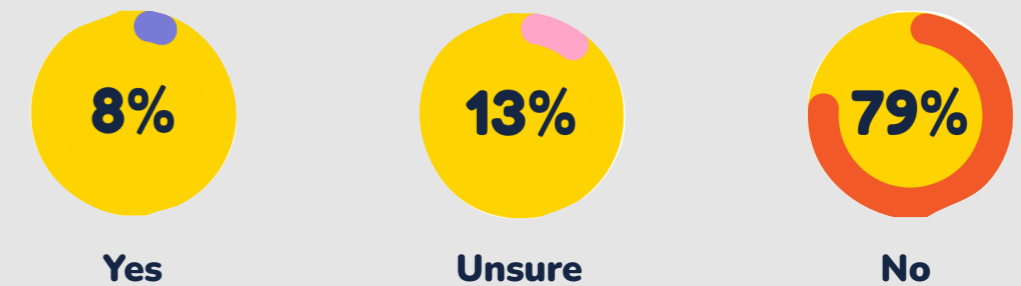


“I am not happy as someone can know a lot about me.”

Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow

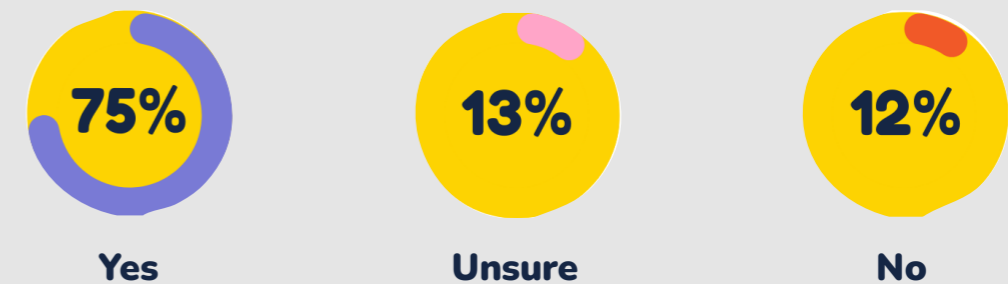
The rest of the children said it depends on the type of data collected – whether it is **“my username or if it’s my real name”** (Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow) or saying that they don’t input factually correct information online. This highlights a recurring theme: that the children are more able to understand the consequences of their direct actions (inputting a password or DOB) over the more passive methods of data collection (how often they visit a site, personal preferences, mouse tracking).

I am happy about websites and apps passing on my data to other companies, so I can receive information about things I am interested in.



Over three quarters of the group felt there should be more rules about what data companies should collect. Although, when asked why they thought this, the children did not confidently articulate reasons.

I think we need more rules about what data companies are allowed to collect.



Members of Children’s Parliament felt that data should only be shared if it is necessary for safety, and if data is to be collected and shared by companies or organisations, they should be asked very clearly for their permission.

“Don’t share information without permission.”

Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow

When discussing consent, the children said information needs to be clear and understandable, in child-friendly language so they can fully consent to their data being shared. They thought a good way to listen to children’s thoughts and ideas would be through co-design of this information and consent forms. The children wanted to have a say in how AI systems use their data and how companies share it. The ways in which this could happen were expanded on when we asked the children to make flags that had messages for adults. Some of these are highlighted below:

- **Supervise children while online.**
- **Update terms and policies to make sure AI is better understood by children.**
- **Support adults to teach children about internet safety.**
- **Use child-friendly words and let children have a say.**

The children highlighted the responsibility of adults in keeping them safe and secure when using and interacting with AI. They recognised the importance of age restrictions on media and social media platforms that use AI, such as YouTube.

“I don’t think they [companies] think about children’s rights at all.”

Member of Children’s Parliament, Glasgow

Many children found differentiating between online safety (keeping passwords safe, not talking to strangers, opening spam emails) and data safety (how a profile of users can be built based on data about their usage of a service or tool) challenging. The children could discuss the impact of their individual actions,

but the way data is used by companies, both generally and for AI systems, was a new concept that was difficult to separate from their personal actions.



What our partners told us

Craig Steele from DSE, who co-facilitated the workshop alongside his colleague Daniel Devine, highlighted that Members of Children’s Parliament had strong feelings about what data should and shouldn’t be shared, and how this relates to fairness.

“I learned more about what they [the children] consider “fair” when it comes to storing personal data about people.”

Craig Steele

The DSE activity encouraged the children to investigate data sets and identify individuals’ data patterns. Children’s Parliament found that this practical approach allowed the children to have more of a technical understanding of how different forms of information, such as transaction data and app usage can affect their security and privacy. This approach complemented activities that Children’s Parliament facilitated, which then allowed the children space to explore how this makes them feel and how this affects their human rights. Members of Children’s Parliament involved in the project have often spoken about their desire to learn more about AI and how this aligns with their right to education and safety.

“The more we learn about AI, the more we’ll know how to keep ourselves safe.”

Investigator

“AI will be in all our lives, so we need to know what it means and how it works before we grow up.”

Investigator

Image (opposite): Members of Children’s Parliament engage in a workshop activity.

The children's enthusiasm provided DSE with further motivation to continue to create new learning materials, especially considering the need to address concerns around safety and security in a proactive manner which promotes children's agency. With popular media often promoting feelings of worry around uses of AI, Children's Parliament have been trying to find a balance when introducing children to varying AI systems by giving space for children to see both pros and cons but also introducing children to systems that are actively aiming to improve their lives.

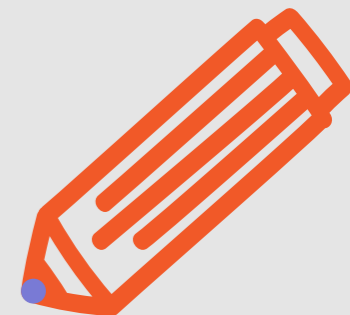
“This workshop encouraged us to continue to develop learning materials that support young learners to understand how AI apps and tools work, and how they can be used in ways that help us, not harm us.”

Craig Steele



3.

AI in Education Edinburgh



What we did

In Edinburgh, the Members of Children's Parliament visited the University of Edinburgh to work with our partners from the Centre for Research in Digital Education who have research interests in participatory design on children's human rights and AI. The activities undertaken invited the children to develop ideas for AI systems that could support both children's rights and learning in the future, as well as gathering their views on a range of possible applications of AI in the classroom.

The following day, Children's Parliament collaborated with Science Ceilidh to explore the children's ideas around the further use of AI in education, with a focus on themes of inclusion in school and the impact of AI on the role of the teacher.

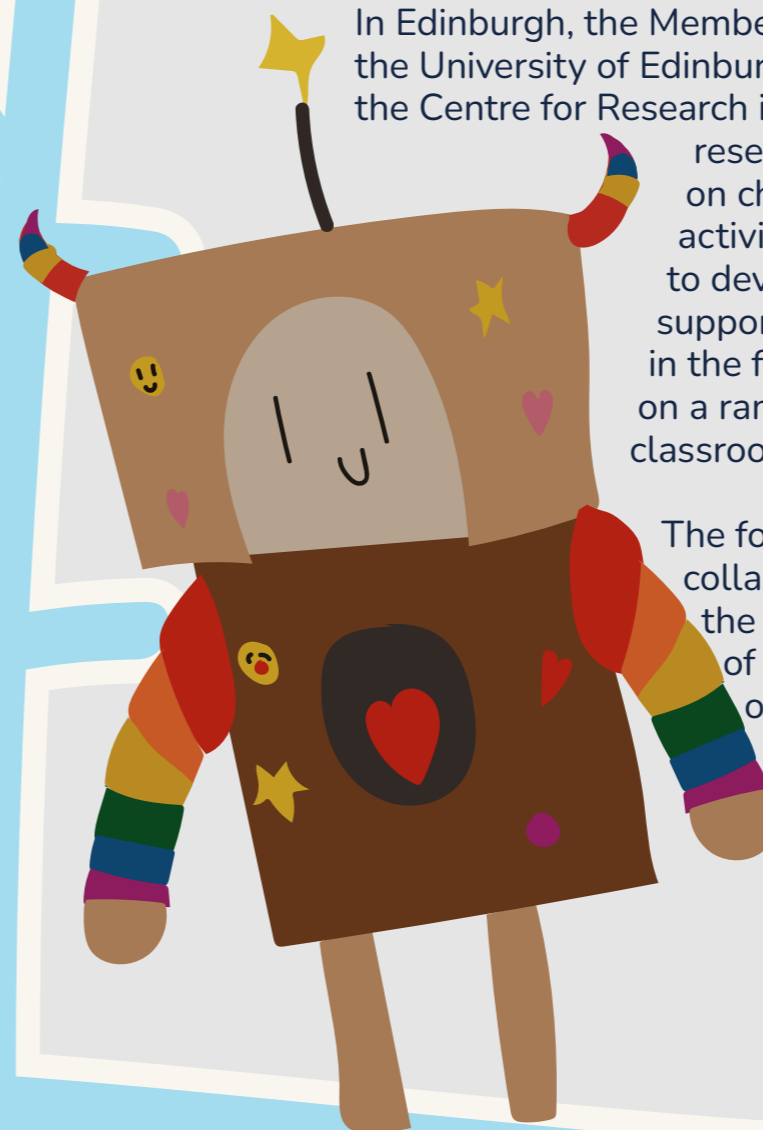


Image (opposite): Box construction.

Image (in box): The Science Ceilidh play for Members of Children's Parliament.