



ARAG Begins Work on the “Digital Risks Survey”

International expert study launched in seven countries

Digital risks are a transnational phenomenon, and that applies in particular to infringements of the personality rights of children and youth. Unfortunately, many families are only too well aware of what cyberbullying means. But how widespread are these conflicts? What effects does cyberbullying have in different countries, and how do people in the countries in question deal with them? These are only a few of the questions addressed in the first international comparative study entitled "ARAG Digital Risks Survey – View on Cyberbullying Prevention" The Düsseldorf insurer ARAG SE and the Institute for Cyberpsychology and Media Ethics in Cologne will be conducting an empirical survey of scholars and experts in the fields of cyberpsychology and media ethics in Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, and the U.S. beginning in October 2015. The goal of the international study is to identify and assess the approaches taken in dealing with the phenomenon of cyberbullying in the various countries. The results of the study are to be published in early 2016.

A good overview of infringements of the personality rights of children, youth, and adults has been achieved at the national level in several countries. ARAG has already commissioned two extensive studies on this issue in Germany in 2013 and 2014. More than 16,000 people were surveyed, and 17 percent of the school students who responded indicated that they had been victims of cyberbullying in the past. Views on these and other issues will now be identified, compared, and evaluated in seven different countries within the framework of this expert study.

Once completed, this research project is to serve as the basis for the development of new concepts and guidelines for comprehensive and sustainable prevention measures designed to protect the personality rights of Internet users.

“The Internet offers users a wealth of opportunities and is accepted as a perfectly natural part of everyday life. It is a fascinating international space without boundaries. But it is not a space in which all rights are automatically suspended. Thus the protection of personality rights has high priority for us, and we need more facts if we are to develop a truly effective approach to protection,” explains Klaus Heiermann, Chief Representative, ARAG SE.

The empirical study will be conducted under the direction of Dr. Catarina Katzer, one of the leading European research experts in this still young field of inquiry.

“The Internet has given rise to a culture of hate. If we fail to pay attention, children and youth will come to accept that as normal. This must not be allowed to happen, for the consequences of cyberbullying, in particular, are not restricted to individual psychological problems that often affect people’s whole lives. Viewed pragmatically, they also have a significant negative impact on the economy. We can’t afford that, and I don’t want to live in that kind of a society. That is why this issue is so close to my heart,” emphasizes Dr. Katzer from the Cyberpsychology and Media Ethics Institute in Cologne.



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