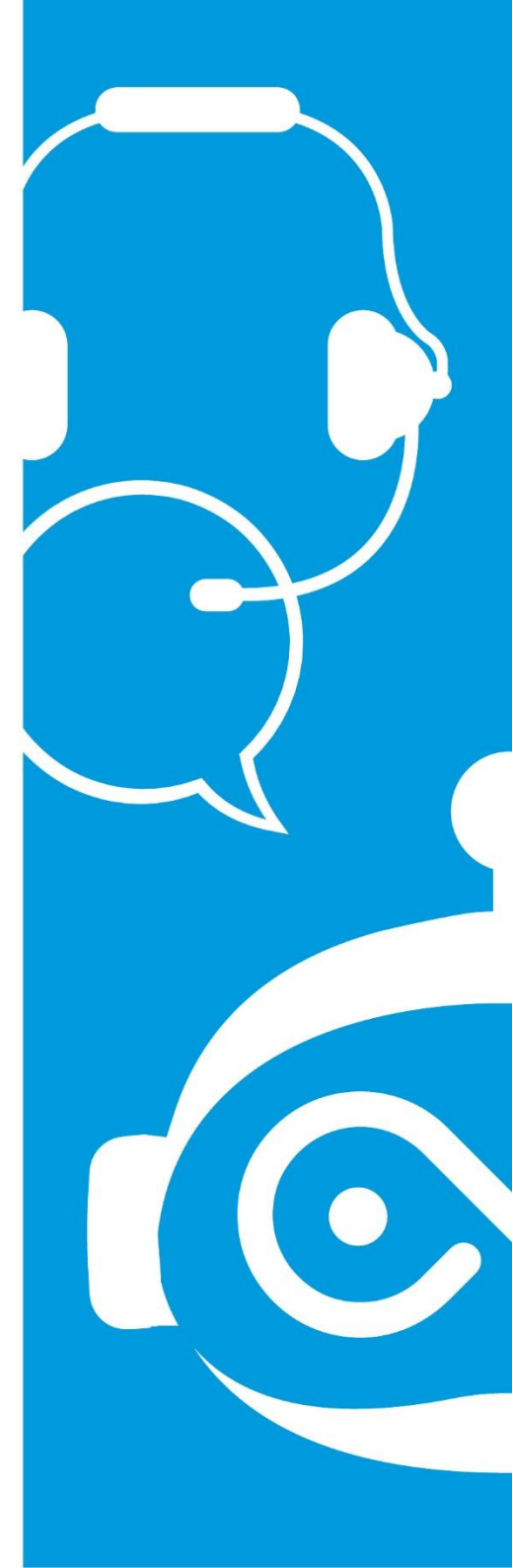




# SRH MATERIAL ONLINE: EXPERT OPINIONS

## What is it?

We can distinguish two types of information that young people can access when browsing for SRH information. They are user-generated content, information that comes from individuals, and expert opinions, information that comes from experts, which is the **digital phenomena** discussed in the following text.



### How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Young individuals are turning to digital platforms and tools to seek information on bodies, relationships, and sexuality. A significant 71% of youths aged 15-24 actively sought SRH education and information online within a year<sup>1</sup>.

The rapid growth of digital information and education has brought about a transformation in the landscape of SRH education. Young people like to turn to the Internet to find information about SRH, as it allows them to get information wherever and whenever they have access to the internet. It allows them to browse anonymously at their own pace and on topics that interest them. If they want information that is correct and can be trusted, they should turn to credible websites and digital tools that are verified by experts.

Digital tools, validated by experts, are available today in a wide variety of formats on different platforms - from videos, social media posts, podcasts, and apps. We have an abundance of digital tools at our disposal, which offer young people interesting, innovative, high-quality and at the same time fact-checked and verified content. For more relevant information, it's important to check for websites and other digital tools from national health centres, national bodies or NGO's working on youth education in your country.

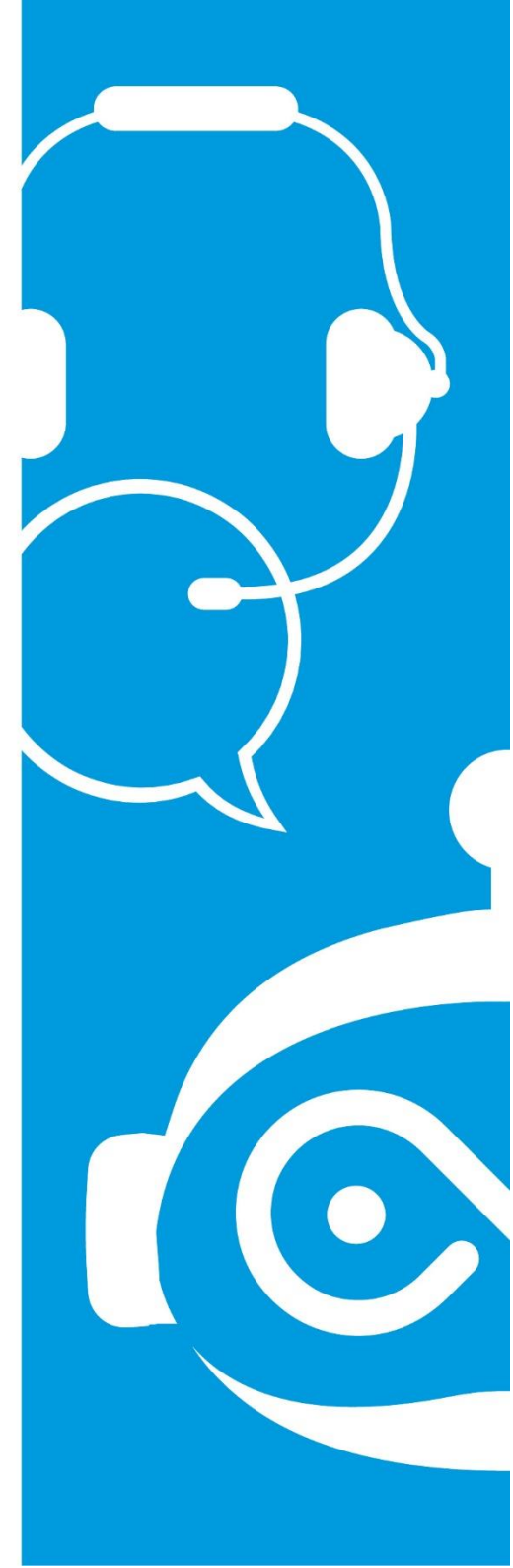
<sup>1</sup> UNESCO, 2020.



### What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

- Provide tools relevant for the youth you work with. The tools we came across are mostly available in English, and, although English is quite well known to young people today, it is important that they acquire knowledge about SRH in their own language. The topic is, thus, more accessible and inclusive even for those who are not proficient in English. It is desirable that youth workers look for certain websites and online tools similar to those described, which are available in their national language and can bring learning about their body, sexuality, reproductive health and emotional health closer to them.
- Tailor content to youth's skills. Even reliable sources of information may be misinterpreted, especially if it is presented in a manner that is not age-appropriate or tailored to one's literacy skills<sup>2</sup>. It is important to know which level of knowledge is appropriate for the group of youth you are dealing with and find resources tailored to their needs.
- Inform about outdated or debunked information. Digital literacy is important for providing credible information, so it is always important to emphasise this to young people and help them develop a critical evaluation of the information they receive. Sometimes even expert sources, which look credible, do not offer the right information, and they can be outdated or not presented clearly.

<sup>2</sup> Doornwaard et al., 2017



### Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- SRH material online: User-generated content
- SRH material online: Opening a dialogue between parents and youth
- Misconceptions and misinformation: About digital literacy

### Further reading:

- “Amaze Org.” YouTube, [www.youtube.com/channel/UCXQZTtGgsy6QHH2fg-OJ\\_eA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXQZTtGgsy6QHH2fg-OJ_eA).
- “A Review of the Evidence: Sexuality Education for Young People in Digital Spaces.” 2020. Health and Education Resource Centre. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373885> .
- Doornwaard, Suzan M., et al. “Dutch Adolescents’ Motives, Perceptions, and Reflections toward Sex-Related Internet Use: Results of a Web-Based Focus-Group Study.” *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 54, no. 8, 2016, pp. 1038–1050, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2016.1255873>.
- Nikkelen, Sanne W., et al. “Sexuality Education in the Digital Era: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Predictors of Online Sexual Information Seeking among Youth.” *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2019, pp. 189–199, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1612830>.
- Oosterhoff, Pauline, et al. “Introduction: Sex Education in the Digital Era.” *IDS Bulletin*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2017.102>.
- Tesema, Martha. “20 Online Resources to Take Sex Ed into Your Own Hands.” *Mashable*, 29 Oct. 2021, <https://mashable.com/article/online-sex-ed-resources>

