



## Evaluation of Cyberhus, 2008-2010 Summary

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## **Introduction**

This is a summary of the evaluation of Cyberhus' activities and developments in the period 2008 through 2010. During this time, Cyberhus has received funding from the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, and it is especially the objectives set forth in the application to the Ministry of Social Affairs, that are the background for this evaluation. At the same time, the evaluation takes into account that the real-life situation has proven different from what was expected when the application was written, and a broader scope focusing also on the prioritisations, challenges and effects of the evaluation period has been chosen. The primary data collection for the evaluation has been through Google Analytics, supplemented with interviews of Cyberhus employees.

## **Briefly on Cyberhus**

Cyberhus is first and foremost an online youth club containing a long range of rooms, where children and young people can participate in several activities, find information and receive counselling. In the various rooms on cyberhus.dk, kids can interact with adults, pose questions, participate in forum debates, tell their story or manage a youth blog.

Cyberhus.dk's target audience is described as 'vulnerable or at-risk youths' between 9 and 18, in particular the 12-15-year-olds (application to the Ministry of Social Affairs).

When Cyberhus received the funding that has now been evaluated it was a quadrupling of our annual grant; this meant that Cyberhus could both ensure the results created in the first years of the organisation's lifetime, and at the same time begin considerable developments.

## **Evaluation summary**

The evaluation of Cyberhus shows an organisation that has, since 2008, seen rapid development. All parts of the organisation are in progress, which supports the qualitative perception that Cyberhus has been both ensuring continuity and progress in this period.

## **Visits to Cyberhus.dk**

The homepage cyberhus.dk is the absolute centre of Cyberhus' services and activities. The evaluation shows significant increase of unique visitors to the site; the number was 18,178 in 2008, and has

risen to 42,052<sup>1</sup> in 2010. The evaluation further shows that cyberhus.dk enjoys countrywide use, as it has been accessed from 626 different Danish towns and cities with the highest concentration of visits originating from Copenhagen and Aarhus. The evaluation stresses, that cyberhus.dk is in contact with an increasing percentage of the target audience, as seen in the chart below. It is worth noticing that according to Statistics Denmark the target audience has not grown in the evaluation period, and we can therefore conclude that cyberhus.dk is indeed seeing increased use by the target audience.

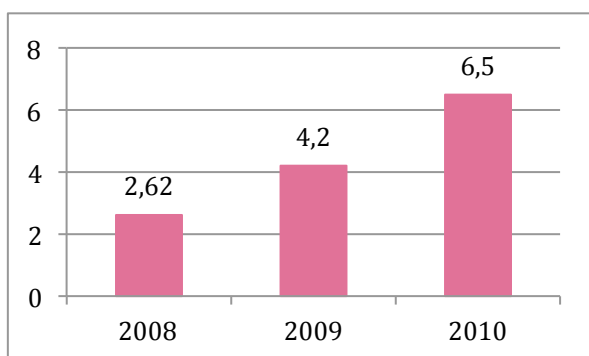


Chart 1: Number of visits, as percentage of the total target audience.

There is a high degree of user retention among a large part of cyberhus.dk's users. More than 14,000 users have visited cyberhus.dk more than 9 times, in 2010. For these kids, Cyberhus must be surmised to be of crucial importance to their network and daily life, and should cyberhus.dk be closed down, a great deal of these kids would lose part of their social network and adult contact.

Cyberhus.dk also services another type of kids; those with more 'regular' youth problems, who as a rule only visit cyberhus.dk a few times each. This help is also deemed crucial, as it can be a preventative measure ensuring that these kids do not experience more serious problems.

About one in ten visitors to cyberhus.dk interact directly; ie. perform some kind of action on the site. These interactions can be seen in the table below.

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<sup>1</sup> Subtracted from these numbers are visits under 11 seconds, which are assumed to be mistakes

Actions	2009	2010
Question and answer – posts	1.270	1.673
Forum post	209	311
Forum replies <sup>2</sup>	847	1.041
Tell your story – posts	59	56
Tell your story - comments	108	66
Chat counselling - sessions	1.565	1.987
Total interactions	4.058	5.134
Visitors	40.603	60.724
Percentage of visits resulting in interaction	9,99	8,45

Table 1: Number of interactions on cyberhus.dk

Based on the number of interactions, the evaluation contains a calculation of the actual cost per counselling interaction. This cost is calculated by dividing the number of interactions<sup>3</sup> with the total costs for that year. In this way, we arrive at an average cost of 659 DKK in 2009 and 503 DKK in 2010.

### Chat Counselling

In the chat counselling, open from Monday through Thursday, from 14 to 19 and Friday from 13 to 16<sup>4</sup>, kids can chat with one of the many affiliated counsellors. All topics are welcome and typical themes are health, nutrition, depression, grief and leisure time activities. In the evaluation period, the chat counselling has seen a 34% growth in the number of chat sessions.

<sup>2</sup> This does not include replies to the Cyber school's posts, since a large part of these are generated during schools visits and hence not created from the kids' own initiative and wish to comment.

<sup>3</sup> Counted as interactions are; chat sessions, an answered question in the various columns, a post or response in a forum or posting a story in Tell Your Story

<sup>4</sup> The opening hours have been expanded throughout the evaluation; the times cited are from the writing of the evaluation, summer 2011

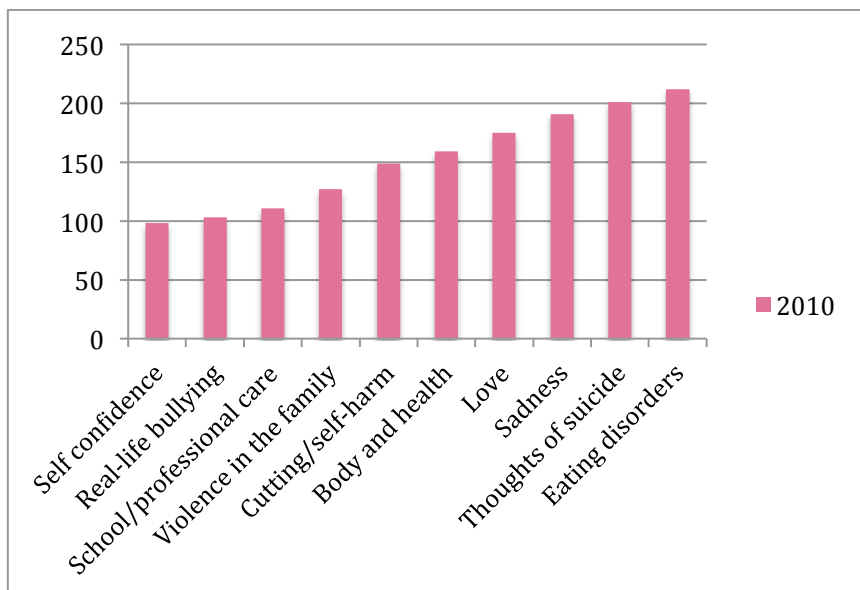


Chart 2: Top 10 problems covered in 2010

In 2010, 1,509 hours were used on 1,987 chat sessions, compared to 859 hours for 1,565 sessions in 2009 (Annual report 2009). This corresponds to an average increase in time spent per session; from 33 minutes in 2009 to 45 minutes in 2010 - an increase of 36%.

Out of 1,987 counselling sessions in 2010, 951 (48%) resulted in a referral, meaning that Cyberhus' chat functions as a bridge to further help for the young. Common referrals are to parents, teachers and doctors, but also to other homepages, other adults, other services on cyberhus.dk, friends, own psychologist, pedagogical professionals or boyfriend/girlfriends are represented.

### Question and Answer Columns

In the Q&A Columns, psychologists, teachers and sexologists are ready to answer questions from children and young people. During 2008 through 2010, 3,232 questions have been asked and answered. The top five themes are:

1. When it hurts inside (850 questions and 6.979 page views)
2. Sex, desire and erotica (332 questions and 11.013 page views)
3. Health and disease (435 questions and 5.406 page views)
4. Get set, ready, teen life (405 questions and 4.282 page views)
5. Food and nutrition (153 questions and 380 page views)

As the number of page views shows, every question is being read by multiple young people, who must be assumed to have their own questions answered in this way.

### **Youth Blogs**

Cyberhus has a long list of affiliated youth bloggers, who write for cyberhus.dk. These are considered to have a close relation to cyberhus.dk, and are among the most loyal users. In the application to the Ministry of Social Affairs, a formulated goal was for children and young people to be empowered in their tasks and given opportunities to make a difference for the well-being of other kids. This is, to a large degree, achieved through the youth blogs.

### **Cyber school**

The Cyber school is Cyberhus' real-life service, offering presentations and open debates for students in 5th through 9th grade. Such thematic talks deal with the current debates on web and phone ethics, and the Cyber school put words to children and young people's digital well-being and identity issues, while focusing on the positive uses of digital media.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Cyberhus' Online Rådgivning for børn og unge (brochure)



The development of the Cyber school in the period 2008-2010 can be seen in the following table.

<b>The Cyber school in numbers 2008-2010</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>I alt</b>
Number of school visits	48	53	74	175
Number of students met during school visits	1059	1113	2258	4430
Specialized school visits (for surveys, Wild Card, etc.)	8	17	0	25
Number of students met during specialized visits	280	479	0	759
Total number of students	1359	1592	2258	5209
Number of unique schools visited *(note that one school can be visited multiple times)	29	36	37	102*
Parents' nights	10	16	8	34
Total number of parents met	255	594	240	1089
Total children and parents met	1469	1594	2498	5561

Table 2: The Cyber school in numbers

Besides the physical visits of the Cyber school, cyberhus.dk also contains a forum where the activities and themes of the Cyber school are discussed and kids participate in the debate about web ethics and netiquette.

### **Satellites and partnerships**

An important goal described in the application to the Ministry of Social Affairs was that Cyberhus expand with five satellites throughout Denmark. During the evaluation period, great effort has been expended to reach this goal, but it has shown not to have the relevance it was believed to have at the time of application. The net as a platform for communication and dialogue has, since that time, developed significantly, meaning that the necessity of these satellites has been reassessed. One employee from Cyberhus says:

*'It became clear to us gradually, that the satellites would take too many resources. It was better to focus on the existing site and the virtual.'*

During the period, great effort has also been made towards establishing partnerships with the municipalities, which has shown to be a big challenge - but in the end of the evaluation and during the first half of 2011, a number of such partnerships have been established.

Cyberhus has experienced that the structural reform of the municipalities have made them organisationally 'paralyzed' with regards to such external partnerships, and in some municipalities it has been difficult to even find the right office and 'get through' a bureaucracy that is perceived as rather rigid.

Here in 2011, work is still underway on established partnerships, and there are expectations in Cyberhus, that it will soon be possible to broker such deals with the municipalities of Aarhus and Odense.

Other possibilities for cooperation are being pursued in the belief that: 'We are able to reach some young people which the municipalities cannot' (coordinator, Cyberhus).

According to the employees, Cyberhus is able to get through to the young people who do not have strong and healthy adult relationships and might not seek out help from teachers, parents or others of their own initiative. In this regard, Cyberhus has a crucial task of being the bridge, which ensures that the young person in question begins handling his or her issues, also outside the virtual world. The work done towards these partnership deals, as well as a general desire to strengthen and develop Cyberhus, has made the founding of Centre for Digital Youth Work (CfDP) a reality. CfDP is a socio-economic business, that will act with other businesses on the market, selling knowledge and expertise to municipalities, schools, etc. It is expected that CfDP will be able to contribute to the funding of the nationwide counselling work of Cyberhus, in the future.

## **Concluding remarks**

The evaluation confidently shows, that Cyberhus, during the evaluated period, has progressed considerably, and that there is a definite need for Cyberhus' services. Throughout the entire period, there have been developments on all fronts, and new endeavours such as CfDP have been undertaken. If we consider the goal set forth in the application to the Ministry of Social Affairs, which form the background for this evaluation, it can be seen that reality is quite different from what was imagined. Particularly the progress in the digital world has made it clear that a strengthened focus on

cyberhus.dk has been preferable to establishing physical satellites. It is important to note, that the wish to ensure Cyberhus as a nationwide service has been fulfilled in the evaluation period, through young people's actual use of cyberhus.dk, instead of through the originally described (and in actuality tested) satellites. By founding CfDP, the goal of establishing partnerships with the municipalities has been given a new platform, and further progress is expected in this area as a result.

Looking to the future, Cyberhus has a continued job in ensuring user retention and that the services offered will make young people use Cyberhus as the online clubhouse it was envisaged as. To meet the young people's demand, Cyberhus will have to continually secure funding for both its continued operation and development. The evaluation concludes that Cyberhus has an important function for a group of young people who are vulnerable during either more serious and longer bouts of problems, or in shorter periods as part of a 'normal' teenage life. For both the approximately 14,000 kids who have visited Cyberhus 9 or more times during 2010, for the kids who can be presumed to have received their answers through one or a few visits, and for those who have been strengthened in their digital skills and abilities through the Cyber schools' activities, Cyberhus' continued work must be deemed of great importance.

SFI (The Danish National Centre for Social Research) concludes in report from 2010 that 5.6% of all children are being physically abused by their parents, and that less than a fifth of these are being exposed during hospitalisation. The report also points out, that as much as 23% of the kids interviewed have experienced mental abuse, where parents humiliate their children or let them know that they are unwanted, unloved or worthless (SFI, 2010). These problems, in this target group, are exactly the ones which Cyberhus is dealing with, with great success. The evaluation of Cyberhus shows, that its counselling can oftentimes create a bridge between the vulnerable children and young people, and a specific opportunity to get help in their area. The employees of Cyberhus observe a perception among young people, that the help and services offered in the municipalities are far away or inaccessible - meaning that Cyberhus has an important function both as a concrete here-and-now offer of help, but also in building a bridge to more local help.

The full evaluation report can be read in full (in Danish) at:  
[www.cyberhus.dk/evalueringer](http://www.cyberhus.dk/evalueringer)