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## Panorama investigates Wi-Fi in schools

Radiation three times worse than phone masts

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 21 May 2007

A BBC Panorama investigation, to be broadcast tonight, has discovered Wi-Fi networks in schools can give off three times the height of the signal radiation of phone masts.

The Chairman of the Health Protection Agency, Sir William Stewart, calls for a review of the health effects of Wi-Fi in the programme, to be broadcast tonight on BBC One.

Current Government advice - from a report published by Sir William in 2000 - recommends that phone masts are not sited near schools because children are thought to be more vulnerable to radio frequency radiation emissions than adults.

Panorama visited a comprehensive school in Norwich and measured the radiation signal strength from a classroom Wi-Fi-enabled laptop.

The programme found the height of the signal strength was three-times higher than the height of the signal strength of a typical phone mast.

Children's skulls are still growing and are thinner than adults' - tests have shown children absorb more radiation than adults when using mobile phones - which could raise questions about the safety of children working bent over computers being exposed to radiation at very close-quarters.

The school Panorama visited had nine classrooms with Wi-Fi nodes in operation, with plans for more. Seventy per cent of secondary schools in the UK already have Wi-Fi and nearly 50% of all primary schools do.

Panorama spoke to nearly 50 of those schools

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and only one had been alerted that there might be possible health risks. Some others had been told that there was no risk.

The full programme "Panorama: Wi-Fi - A Warning Signal" is due to be broadcast tonight at 8.30pm on BBC One.