

Staying Safe in Cyberspace: An Introduction to “What Parents Need to Know”

Where to Begin?

Take a Deep Breath...

- It's not uncommon for kids to know more about the Internet than parents or teachers.
- Adults need to help kids stay safe, but must learn not to overreact when they find out a child or teenager has been exposed to inappropriate material or strayed from a rule.
- If that happens, the best strategy is to work together! Learn what happened and figure out how to keep it from happening again.
 - From <http://kids.getnetwise.org/safetyguide/>

...And Get Educated!

Common Sense Approach to Internet Safety

Common Sense Media is a national organization led by concerned parents and individuals from leading research, academic and policy institutions as well as the business community.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUyQIOUSNSY>

Wired Safety

Wired Safety is a volunteer run, non-profit organization headed by Parry Aftab, a mom, international cyberspace privacy and security lawyer, and author of *The Parent's Guide to Protecting Your Children in Cyberspace* (McGraw-Hill). <http://www.wiredsafety.org/>

Wired Safety Highlights:

- Animated Videos You can watch with your children!
<http://www.wiredsafety.org/flashandvideo/index.html>
- Parenting Online: <http://www.wiredsafety.org/resources/pdf/parentingonline.pdf>
- Online Gaming Safety Tips: <http://tinyurl.com/GamingSafety>
- For the Kids: <http://www.wiredsafety.org/youth.html>

GetNetWise

Highly recommended site for parents who want to educate themselves and their children about how to use the Internet safely <http://kids.getnetwise.org/>

On Guard Online

A partnership between the federal government & technology industry <http://www.onguardonline.gov/>

- Net Cetera: An easy to read guide to all things online <http://www.onguardonline.gov/pdf/tec04.pdf>

American Library Association

Online safety rules & recommended resources from the ALA <http://tinyurl.com/ALA-Online-Safety>

What Can Go Right?

“The challenges posed by the Internet can be positive. Learning to make good choices on the Internet can serve young people well by helping them to think critically about the choices they will face. Today it's the Internet; tomorrow it may be deciding whether it's safe to get into the car of someone a teen meets at a party.”

- From <http://kids.getnetwise.org/safetyguide/>

Online Social Networking: A Definition

- Social networking sites offer a “space” for building online communities.
- Users of these sites create a profile, then connect that profile to others to create a personal network.
- Social network users post messages and other content to their profiles, using tools embedded within the sites to contact other users (“friends”).
- Teenagers and young adults are among the most avid users of such websites.

The Burning Questions: What can go wrong?

- How much personal information are teens making available on these networks?
- Are they sharing information that might harm future college or job prospects?
- Or worse—are they sharing information that puts them at risk of victimization?
From “Teens, Privacy & Online Social Networks: How teens manage their online identities and personal information in the age of MySpace <http://tinyurl.com/TeensPrivacySocialNetworks>

Why Do Teens Love Social Networking & How Can You Teach Them to Protect Themselves?

Never post anything to the internet you wouldn't put on a postcard!

- From Parents: The Anti-Drug.com, a site created by the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign: <http://tinyurl.com/TheAnti-Drug>
- Social Networking Site Safety Tips: <http://www.wiredsafety.org/resources/pdf/socialnetworktips.pdf>
- Teens at Risk & Parents Disconnected: An E-Guide for Parents: <http://www.theantidrug.com/pdfs/Teens-Tech-Guide.pdf>
- Age-based guidelines for Internet use from MicroSoft: <http://www.microsoft.com/protect/parents/childsafety/age.aspx>
- Filtering vs. “Accountability” Software: <http://www.safefamilies.org/SoftwareTools.php> ; <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/>

The Major Players: MySpace, Facebook, Twitter

MySpace: <http://www.myspace.com/>

- A video tutorial produced by MySpace and IKeepSafe.org. Includes information for parents on contacting MySpace. <http://www.ikeepSAFE.org/PRC/videotutorials/myspace/index.html>
- Seven Things All Adults Should Know About Social Networking http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/columnists/johnson/johnson009.shtml
- MySpace Cheat Sheet for Parents <http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2006/02/70287>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/>

- Facebook Safety: Scroll down to the bottom of this page for the For Parents section <http://www.facebook.com/safety/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/>

- Twitter in Plain English: <http://www.commoncraft.com/Twitter>
- Twitter's Policy Towards Children: (Scroll down to very bottom of page) <http://twitter.com/privacy>

What Else Can Go Wrong?

“Sexting” & Cyber-Bullying

- Today Show feature on “Sexting”: <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/28793204#28793204>
- Stop Cyber Bullying: <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/>
- Stop Bullying Now for Adults: <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/cyber-bullying.aspx>
- Chat Room Safety Tips: http://www.wiredsafety.org/safety/chat_safety/index.html
- Net Smartz Workshop: <http://www.netsmartz.org/index.aspx>

Online Resources & the Right Way to Use Them

Using the Internet for School Projects

We should always think critically about the information we find, regardless of the source, but Web sources present a special challenge. Why?

- The materials found on the Web are not “selected” as in a library collection
- No standards or guidelines exist for publication on the World Wide Web (www)
- That means ANYBODY can publish ANYTHING on the web whether or not they have authoritative credentials in the subject area

Give every website the *Reliability Test!*

- Consult multiple sources to verify information.
- Be alert to sites that advocate a one-sided point of view (bias); motives are not always obvious. Ask yourself: Where’s the money? Who benefits? Use information as appropriate, it may be an excellent source, but understand the context!
- Pay attention to the URL! U.S. sites are assigned a suffix according to the groups or individuals who own them. For example:
 - Commercial: <http://www.thebioenergysite.com/index.php>
 - Advocacy: <http://www.drivingethanol.org/>
 - U.S. Government: <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/Feg/ethanol.shtml>
 - Educational Institutions: <http://news-service.stanford.edu/news/2007/april18/ethanol-041807.html> ; http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2006/01/26_ethanol.shtml

Evaluation Criteria & A Few Good Sources for Reliable Websites

- How to Evaluate Web Sites (for Kids) from Kathy Schrock <http://kathyschrock.net/abceval/5ws.pdf>
- How to Evaluate Websites for Teens & Adults from Ohlone College <http://www2.ohlone.edu/org/library/webeval.html>
- Don’t forget your local library’s web & database resources! <http://www.aclibrary.org/>
 - Explore the Kids & Teens sections (top toolbar)
- Great Web Sites for Kids from the American Library Association: Websites for children up to and including age 14 <http://www.ala.org/greatsites>
- Librarians’ Internet Index: Websites You Can Trust <http://lii.org/>

The Internet is a tremendous tool.

But like many tools, it can become dangerous with misuse.

You wouldn’t let your child use a chain saw without training & supervision!

Learn! Then let this “tool” grant you & your family safe passage to
a world of information & opportunity.