

Protecting children on the internet

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Is the internet as dangerous as people think? (Or what is the internet?)

- The internet is public
- The internet mirrors behaviors found in the real (offline) world
- Web-pages, email, chat-rooms, discussion forums, newsgroups, real-time video
- Don't blame the internet -- you don't stay entirely out of a town, just because it has a bad side.
- The internet is a valuable and important tool for communication and education

Dangers facing children on the Internet

- Pornography
- Hate literature
- Hate propaganda
- Shopping (solicit sales to children)
- Illegal (stolen) software (warez)
- Cult recruiting
- Drug recipes
- Bomb making plans
- Glorifying criminals and deviants
- Teaching intolerance and bigotry
- Crackers (and computer break-ins)
- Viruses and Trojans

Misinformation

- Many sites publish hype, satire, hoaxes, rumors, parodies and other misleading and false information.
- False medical, scientific and legal information is published
- Examples: Bob Dole for President -- said he is part of the Dole Fruit Company; some government-type URLs really point to pornographic or parody sites.
- It is important to use critical thinking before you trust a site's content.

Freedom of speech/censorship

- Working to censor freedom of speech may end up causing you to lose your own freedoms

Involvement -- parental and education

- Teach children what is truly "right and wrong" behavior
- Watch for children's behavioral warning signs
- It is your job to teach your children and to look out for your children's safety
- Prepare your kids for when they use the internet at friends, schools or library.
- Teach your children to think critical -- to be able to recognize site's content as being factual. And free advice is not always good advice.
- Establish rules (see AUP below)

Control -- restricting use

- With technology - Software
 - Filtering mail and/or websites
 - Restricting mail and/or websites
- With rules
 - Acceptable Use Policy

Software Solutions

- Software solutions can filter or block incoming
- Software solutions can filter or block outgoing information, like credit card numbers, address, phone number -- but this can easily be worked-around, such as "6x5x8x8x5x3x6" as a phone number.
- Some are password based
- Some software can monitor surfing activity and provide alerts
- Some software can generate reports about surfing activity

Software Solutions

- Surfwatch
- CyberPatrol
- Cybersitter
- NetShepherd
- NetNanny
- KinderGuard

Point your kids towards

- **Safe sites**

- Create or set a default homepage
- Create a bookmark list of good sites

- **Safe search engines**

- No filter is 100% accurate
- Don't rely on these, but they may help

- **Safe websites for kids**

Acceptable-Use Policy (AUP)

- Parents and children agree and sign a family-approved, computer and internet usage policy
- **Ideas for AUP**
 - Agree not to crack (or attempt to break into) other's computers

Working with your Internet Service Provider - ISP

- Work with your ISP
- Ask about server-side/server-level proxies and filtering (like Bess)
- Some ISPs offer SPAM/email filtering (like ORBS or MAPS RSS)
- Some ISPs offer Parental Controls (like AOL)

AUP Ideas

- Keep computer in open, communal, family room
- Direct supervision (education is more important)
- Talk to children, friends and their parents about proper internet usage
- Off-line usage (previously download web-pages)
- Ask schools (and libraries) about "acceptable usage policy" for internet and computer usage.

Detective work

- Web browsers store information about what web pages have been visited.
- For example, Microsoft Explorer and Netscape Navigator has a "history" window that can show the site name, URL (location), when first visited, when last visited (date and time) and how many times the webpage was visited.
- Also, web browsers store web pages so they can be loaded quickly when you click your back arrow; depending on your settings you could have thousands of previously visited web pages and graphics (images) saved on your hard drive.

Detective work

Examples

- Receiving inappropriate email
- Receiving inflammatory email (another person with my name)
- Rating systems for web pages and games

Computer Security

- Cable and DSL users are always connected -- giving more chances and time for malicious users to try to break in.
- Trojans are programs that are doing something malicious in the background; for example, while you play a game, the program is really destroying your files or installing other backdoor software
- A "backdoor" is a program or technique to get access to your computer (or software)
- A virus (or worm) is a program that replicates itself; for example it may do something malicious to your computer and also send a copy of itself to everyone in your email address book.

Netiquette -- proper internet behavior

- Sometimes improper behavior can instigate inappropriate emails (flames), mail bombs (huge emails) or mail floods (numerous and unmanageable emails); or you may get dropped by your ISP

Spam -- unsolicited mail

- Don't reply back to the spammer -- even if they ask you to request to get off their list.
- Don't complain continually to your ISP; instead work with your ISP and ask suggestions on how to prevent spam.
- Blocking addresses.
- Blocking spamming mail server addresses.
- Blocking addresses doesn't always work -- spammers will just use another email address or another mail server.

Web pages to visit

- www.safekids.com
- www.wiredkids.org
- www.microsoft.com/education
- www.playitcybersafe.com
- www.pin.org.uk/
- www.familyguidebook.com
- www.media-awareness.ca
- www.bewebaware.ca