



e-Safety Help Sheet

KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Many adults find keeping up to date with children's use of technology challenging. Knowing the trends in children's use of technology and the kind of environment they are immersed in is key to giving them the right advice and guidance in a timely and age-appropriate way. E-safety relates to many parts of the curriculum, including ICT, and Life Studies. More broadly, however, because technology can be used in any subject area, it is relevant to all adults within a school setting.

So what are the risks?

To make things simple, Childnet categorise the risks for children into these areas:

Contact

Contact from someone online who may wish to bully or abuse the child.

Online Grooming

A criminal minority make use of the internet and related services, such as chat rooms, gaming and social networking sites, to make contact with young people. The intention of these people is to establish and develop relationships with young people with the sole purpose of persuading them into sexual activity. These techniques are often known as 'online enticement', 'grooming' or 'child procurement'. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 includes a grooming offence specifically introduced to combat this abuse of the internet.

Cyber-bullying

New technologies provide an apparently anonymous method by which bullies can torment their victims at any time of day or night; this is known as cyberbullying. While the victims may not be in physical danger, they may receive email, chat or text messages or be the target of unfavourable websites or social networking profiles that make them feel embarrassed, upset, depressed or afraid. This can damage their self-esteem and pose a threat to their psychological well-being.

Viewing inappropriate content

There is a risk that when using the internet or other online services and technologies, young people may be exposed to inappropriate content. This may be material that is pornographic, hateful or violent, encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal, or is just age-inappropriate or biased. One of the key benefits of the web is that it is open to all, but unfortunately, this also means that those with extreme political, racist or sexist views also have a free voice.

Plagiarism & Copyright

Plagiarism and copyright are key issues, particularly in relation to copying schoolwork and downloading music or games, as popularised by many file sharing services. Children must understand that these activities can have serious moral, legal and financial consequences – the youngest file-sharer to be sued to date was just 12 years old.

Inaccurate Information

Anyone can write what they want and post it on the internet, and as a result not all the information available online is good information. Inaccurate information can be misleading or even dangerous in some situations, for example when it covers health advice.

User generated content

With the advent of Web 2.0 technologies (web-based technologies that involve online collaboration and sharing among users), young people are increasingly creators of digital content, some of it can be very personal. For example blogs or 'web logs' are journals that are available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is 'blogging'. Blogs are a popular part of web 2.0. It is now also simple to create digital content and upload it to the internet or a mobile phone. Children need to know that embarrassing or compromising words or photos of themselves or their friends, could stay there forever and be used against them in the future.

Commercialism

Aggressive advertising and marketing schemes can invade young people's privacy, both online and via their mobile phones

E-Commerce

E-commerce continues to grow, and there is a risk that young people may give out financial details, eg: the credit card details of a parent, while online. This can result in unexpected consequences and charges. Studies found that children were able to register with online gambling websites using debit cards issued on youth accounts, which are available to children as young as 11.

Privacy

Many sites and online services request personal information and data about a user. Protecting one's privacy online is an important issue, because personal information is sometimes misused and passed on to third parties. Pupils need to be taught how to protect their Privacy when using the internet.

Junk email & Spam

Unsolicited emails or text messages containing offers that sound too good to be true can often contain links to content that is inappropriate for children. Phishing and similar scams may trick young people (or their parents) into revealing personal or financial information which could be used for identity theft

Premium rate services

Premium rate services offer ring tones, logos and competitions. The phone numbers for these services often begin with **090**. Information and entertainment is available via landline telephone, mobile phone, PC (by email, the internet or bulletin boards) and interactive digital TV services for a high charge. Some children have been caught out by premium rate subscriptions: they thought they were making a one-off purchase for a ring tone, but were in fact tied in to a reverse-billed subscription (in which you pay to receive text messages).

What are the trends?

Social Networking & Blogging

Social networking sites, chat rooms, wikis and blogs are places where young people can create personalised web-pages or profiles to express themselves or connect with their friends or social networks. These web-based technologies are part of Web 2.0 technologies.

Downloading Peer to Peer (P2P) Communication and File Sharing

A file-sharing network enables people to exchange photos, videos, music, software and games directly between computers using downloaded P2P software. Many young people use these networks to download copyrighted music, films and software

Mobile Technologies

The majority of web-based services have become available on mobile phones. Social networking, for example, has become increasingly mobile: as handsets become increasingly sophisticated, users are able to upload content to their profiles on the internet from their mobile phones while on the move. Other technologies, such as games machines, also give access to the internet or Bluetooth.