



THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS

BLOCKING

Whilst your children are online they may come across websites displaying inappropriate pop-ups and advertisements. It's important to teach your child how to delete pop-ups. Knowing how to block a website can stop them from being targeted by spammers who use adware and popups to attack their computer. Try visiting some of your children's favourite websites to find out if personal data is shared and if there are any inappropriate advertisements. There are two options which can help you to control the content your children see when they are online:

1 FILTERING AND BLOCKING

You can choose to **filter and block** any content you may find inappropriate for your child. You can prevent access to certain websites, words and images in order to avoid children coming across inappropriate content. Depending on the level of security requested, you can either adjust your web browser or use internet filtering software.

Adjusting the settings of your internet browser is the easiest way to block certain websites. When working with Internet Explorer, 'open browser' and select 'tools' on top of the page. Select 'internet options' and look for the 'privacy' tab. Under the privacy window, a button called 'sites' can be selected, where the address of the unwanted site can be entered. This process will be different for other browsers, but can be easily found online. Please note that changing browser settings is not always 100% effective, so you may want to consider buying additional filtering and blocking software, which offers more extensive options of parental control. To help you make a well-informed decision on which tool would best fit your needs, you can see the **SIP Bench II website** of the European Commission. There you'll find the results of a helpful study on parental control tools.

2 MONITORING

You may prefer not to limit the online activity of your children but instead to monitor what they do on the internet. This way children are free to discover the online world on their own, while being supervised so you can step in when necessary. Depending on the level of monitoring, you may be able to track the names and nature of all websites visited, view any posts made on social networking sites, read online chats and instant messaging conversations and even scan your children's emails.

While parents cannot always maintain a daily review of their child's online activity, most monitoring software offers the possibility to receive a warning signal when a certain website was visited, or specific content was published. Monitoring tools are not usually provided by a browser so they would need to be purchased.

Regardless of the choice you make to either monitor and/or use filtering software, you also need to decide whether you do so with or without your child's knowledge. It is important to weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of a certain level of control and to take into account the personality and age of your child. Very young children are most vulnerable as they usually lack the social skills to detect certain dangers when online, and are more easily startled when they come across harmful information. When dealing with the youngest, it is sensible to take measures to block unwanted content.

Though parental control might work well for young children, the situation is different for teenagers. With more online experience, they can more easily get around any controls that you may set in place. Moreover, teenagers are constantly striving for independence and the freedom to develop at their own pace. Secret monitoring or blocking of information without their consent might end up having the reverse effect. Teach teenagers how they can responsibly 'personalize their internet experience' by blocking unwanted websites and content. Give them the necessary skills to be good digital citizens and surf the web in a safe, comfortable manner.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

SIP Bench II website:
www.sipbench.eu

Find out more from the Insafe network:
www.saferinternet.org





THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

— ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS —

PRIVACY ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networking sites (SNS) allow people around the world to share information. But how can you help your children stay safe when they socialise online? It may seem difficult to protect their personal details on SNS, but a few simple clicks will make sure that some important privacy settings are in place.

1 PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

By default, on most SNS your child's profile will only have a minimum level of privacy protection. There are two basic settings:

- ▶ **Public:** "Everything can be seen by everybody"
- ▶ **Closed or Private:** "Nobody can see anything, unless you want them to"

The first step towards protecting your children's privacy is to encourage them to choose a "closed" or "private" profile. Simple!

2 BLOCKING

Secondly, your children need to decide who they will allow to see their profile. Encourage them only to accept people they know to become their friends. If they do come across an unwanted contact, they can always block this person from their account.

3 TESTING THE SETTINGS

In the real world the amount of personal information we want to share with someone depends on who we're actually talking to. The same approach should apply to your child's social media profile. Most SNS give people the opportunity to decide how much information they want to share with certain groups, circles or communities. Many SNS have the option to check 'privacy settings' by allowing users to view their own profile as someone else. In this way, they can clearly see if any unwanted information appears on their profile.

4 TAKING CONTROL OF TAGGING

Protecting privacy isn't just about protecting the information your children put on a SNS. Other people can also publish images and videos and link their name to this content without their permission. This is better known as 'tagging'. Most SNS allow users to disable the tagging feature or have the option to ask the users' approval for each piece of content tagged. Encourage your children to add this setting so they can be in control of their online reputation.

5 SCREENING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Last but not least: If it's really sensitive information, tell your children not to post it online! **Download the 'personal information' tip sheet for more information.**

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Facebook's privacy policy:

www.facebook.com/about/privacy/

Facebook's helpcenter on privacy:

www.facebook.com/help/privacy

Find out more from the Insafe network:

www.saferinternet.org



THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

— ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS —

ONLINE FRIENDS

Help your children develop the knowledge and social skills to make sensible decisions about the people they meet online.

1 TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!

Tell your children to watch out for people who are overly friendly, for example, appearing to have exactly the same taste in music, movies, actors, etc. An online predator's aim is to gain the trust of children. Predators will therefore be very kind to them at first and often pretend to be their 'soul mate'.

2 INCONSISTENCIES IN FRIENDS' STORIES

Advise your children to look out for inconsistencies in their online friends' stories. For example, they should be very cautious if one of their online friends all of a sudden turns out to be much older than they originally said. If this is the case, it's best to break all contact.

3 FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCT

Even if your child has the slightest of suspicions, they shouldn't hesitate to talk to a trusted adult.

4 THE DELICATE TOPIC OF SEX

Research has shown that teenagers who talk about sex with strangers online are more likely to come into contact with predators. These predators usually try to diminish any inhibitions your child may have by gradually introducing sexual content into the conversations. Tell your children that if online strangers start talking about sexual content in any way shape or form they should tell a trusted adult and stop talking to them immediately.

5 CONFIDE IN A TRUSTED ADULT

Make sure your children know they can always come to you or another trusted adult if they feel threatened by someone or if they're uncomfortable because of something they encountered online. **Help them to report any concerns to the police or to the website in question.**

6 MEETING OFFLINE FRIENDS – SET THE RULES

If your children want to meet online friends in the offline world for the first time, agree on strict rules **Download the "meeting strangers" tip sheet.**

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

OnGuard Online:

www.onguardonline.gov

INHOPE:

www.inhope.org

Find out more from the Insafe network:

www.saferinternet.org



ins@fe





THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

— ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS —

MEETING STRANGERS

Through the internet, children are now able to communicate with people from all over the world. Online 'friendships' can sometimes evolve into real-life friendships. This means your children may be interested in meeting virtual strangers. Depending on the age and maturity of your child, as well as the context of the meeting, you can allow your child to go to a meeting with a stranger together with a friend, instead of a trusted adult. As young people can sometimes be naive and lack the social skills to assess the intentions of the people they meet online, it's necessary for you to set clear rules about meeting strangers in real life.

SUGGESTED RULES FOR YOUR CHILDREN

- 1** Before meeting someone you've met online, make sure you get to know them better first. Ask them about their family, hobbies, etc. If you notice any inconsistencies in their story, or if they seem too good to be true, it's better not to meet them.
- 2** Tell a trusted adult (parent / family member / caretaker) that you intend to meet this person and give them details about the person's identity.
- 3** Tell a trusted adult (parent / family member / caretaker) where and when you are meeting and make clear arrangements on when you'll be back home.
- 4** It is very easy for people to pretend to be someone else online. Therefore, it's worth doing a background check by using Google search or asking your friends and family.
- 5** Bring a trusted adult or friend to your first meeting, they can always leave you once you have arrived at the location and feel at ease. If your online friend refuses to come to the meeting if an adult or friend is there, then this is usually a sign of trouble.
- 6** Arrange to meet in a public place, not at a private location. Having other people around will make it safer.
- 7** Make sure your phone is charged and keep it on and with you at all times.
- 8** Trust your intuition. If something doesn't feel right, it may be best to cut the meeting short and contact a trusted adult.
- 9** Meet your new friend(s) a few times under these circumstances until you are certain they really are the person you've gotten to know online.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Find out more from the Insafe network:

www.saferinternet.org



ins@fe





THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Any information we put online will remain there forever, for anyone to see - it's almost impossible to delete! This means it's important to thoroughly consider what you and your children should reveal about yourselves on the web. You should teach your children which pieces of information should be private and also help them to understand in which situations they should share private details and when they shouldn't give anything away at all.

1 DISCLOSING IDENTITY

Your child's name, national identification number, address and phone number are very valuable for online predators and criminals. Advise your children only to give out such information as their phone number and address to trusted friends. This will, to some extent, protect them from becoming the victim of an online predator and limit the possibility of becoming a victim of cyberbullying.

2 INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ON WHEREABOUTS

Talk to your children at an appropriate age and time about avoiding giving away information about their location. This precaution goes far beyond children not revealing their address, but also involves concealing details such as where they go to school or where they play sports. It is also important to warn them not to talk about any of their travel plans, or when the home will be left unattended. Such information is the ultimate gift for thieves!

3 LOCATION BASED SERVICES

A Location Based Service (LBS) uses information on the geographical position of a mobile device to offer information and entertainment services related to the user's location. It is important to check all the active applications on your child's mobile phone and decide if they need to be disabled or not.

4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Inform your child that any kind of financial information such as bank account numbers should never be displayed online.

5 PASSWORDS

Warn your children that by sharing their passwords with others it can give people access to their account. Even with good friends, this is best avoided.

6 SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MESSAGES, PHOTOS OR VIDEOS

We all know that children grow up quickly and this includes exploring their sexuality, even before we, as parents are ready for it. Strongly discourage your children from creating and sharing sexually explicit photos, videos or messages of themselves (or others) as these can easily appear on the internet for anyone to see. In addition to risking their reputation and friendships, they could be breaking the law if they create, forward, or even save this kind of message or image.

7 EMBARRASSING PHOTOS OR VIDEOS AND HURTFUL OR INSULTING COMMENTS

Encourage your children to think before they post things online. The online behaviour of people, including the things they post, will determine their online reputation. Remember, what they post online now will remain there forever. To avoid future disappointments (university, college and jobs), it's best to maintain a positive reputation.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Find out more from the Insafe network:
www.saferinternet.org





THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

— ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS —

ONLINE REPUTATION

We live in a society where more than 85% of recruiters say they conduct a name search on job candidates, so it's extremely important for your children to manage their online reputations. What we post online shapes our public image. Here are a few examples of online postings that backfired:

EXPELLED FOR A FACEBOOK POST

Two students were suspended, and one student was expelled, over negative Facebook postings they made about a teacher. The individuals were in seventh grade (12 or 13 years old) at Chapel Hill Middle School, according to My Fox Atlanta. The children were accused of violating a section of the school code that is a "level one" offense, the worst possible: "Falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting, or erroneously reporting" allegations of inappropriate behavior by a school employee toward a student.

Alejandra Sosa said she regretted posting a Facebook status calling her teacher a paedophile. She was suspended for 10 days. Alejandra said in a statement. "I had no intentions of ruining his reputation."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Thessa, a girl from Hamburg, Germany thought she only invited a handful of friends to her birthday party, but around 1,500 people showed up — a development that caused the 16-year-old to flee her home. Thessa had not checked the privacy settings on her birthday invitation and the event invite was accessible to anyone on Facebook. In the days leading up to the party the number of RSVPs skyrocketed to over 15,000 attendees. That gave Thessa's family some idea of what was in store. Although they cancelled the party and notified the police, not even a public announcement could stop the most persistent party-goers. On the night of Thessa's birthday, large crowds celebrated in her absence. Over the course of the night, eleven people were temporarily detained and one police officer was injured.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Find out more from the Insafe network:
www.saferinternet.org





THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS

ONLINE GAMING

Online gaming can have a positive influence on the development of your children. However, it's essential to find a good balance between gaming and other daily activities. It's also recommended to keep an eye on the content of the games played by children, to make sure they're safe. To ensure games are right for your children – why not try them out for yourself!

FACTS ABOUT ONLINE GAMING

- 1 83% of all children worldwide play games online.
- 2 According to the EU Kids online survey, playing games is the **second favorite online activity**. Surprisingly 'Doing homework' comes first!
- 3 Games require children to stick to rules and follow directions, they can actually **increase their capacity for self-discipline and autonomy**.
- 4 One in four 11 to 16 year old children say that **mature-rated games are their favorite**.
- 5 There is **no evidence** to prove that playing violent video games causes any **lasting increase in aggressiveness or violence**.

AGE APPROPRIATE GAMES

Even non-experienced gamers can select the right games thanks to the Pan-European Game Information (PEGI) age rating system, which is now used throughout most of Europe.

The PEGI label appears on the front and back of offline computer games, providing a description of the content and one of the following age levels: 3, 7, 12, 16 and 18.

The descriptive labels explain why a game has received a particular age rating. There are eight such descriptors: violence, bad language, fear, drugs, sex, discrimination, gambling and online gameplay with other people. The age levels give parents an understanding of the suitability of the game content for children, but do not take into account the difficulty level or skills needed to play a game.

With the rise in **online gaming**, PEGI recently created an online logo, which any gameplay service provider can display providing that the website meets the requirements

set out in the PEGI Online Safety Code (POSC). These requirements include the obligation to keep the website free from illegal and offensive content or any undesirable links created by users, as well as measures protecting young people while they play games.

TIPS FOR ONLINE GAMING

- ▶ Limit the time your children spend playing games.
- ▶ Find a healthy balance between gaming and other activities such as meeting friends.
- ▶ Decide if the content of a game is fit for your child by looking at the PEGI symbols.
- ▶ Set strict rules about making purchases while playing online.
- ▶ When playing online multiplayer games, make sure your children do not share personal information.
- ▶ Try out the games yourself and possibly play together with your child. You may find you actually enjoy it!

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

PEGI:

www.pegi.info/en/

The 'Good Gaming Guide':

www.pegi.info/en/index/id/media/pdf/241.pdf

Videogamers in Europe 2010: Interactive Software Federation Europe:

www.isfe.eu/sites/isfe.eu/files/video_gamers_in_europe_2010.pdf

Find out more from the Insafe network:

www.saferinternet.org

