



Cyber Savvy Parents

ISSUE 3

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A SERIES TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THE ONLINE AND MOBILE WORLD.

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Parental Control

Keeping Kids “Surf Smart and Surf Safe”

Balancing use and safety is a key to safe internet usage. The internet is everywhere! Schools, libraries, universities, businesses and even on most of the phones our kids have. When kids use the Internet for education the advantages are endless,. However the Internet can also be dangerous which means teaching children right and wrong conduct on the web is imperative.

Let’s look at what a parent can do to make sure that internet use by their children is both *safe and appropriate*.

Don’t Overreact:

Adults have the difficult task of keeping kids safe on the internet but it is important to learn not to overreact when they find out a child or teen has

Whatever you do, don’t blame or punish your child if they tell you about an inappropriate/uncomfortable on line encounter. If they voluntarily tell you of an inappropriate situation then they know that something is amiss and are looking for your support or protection. If you punish them then you will teach them to **not** come to you for support or protection in the future.

Your best strategy is to work with the child so you both can learn from what happened and figure out how to keep it from happening again.

Learning to make good choices on line 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 they have just met.

Learning how to make good choices is a skill that will last a lifetime so don’t miss this opportunity to teach your child.

Source:

<http://kids.getwise.org>



According to the survey, 76% of US online kids used social networks and gaming web sites.

Ways To Protect Your Child On-line “Free” of Charge



Just released is a new site known as www.missamericakids.com. Here over 10,000 kid friendly sites have been prescreened and reviewed by the Miss America organization and Children's Education Network

There are several nationally recognized website controls that are *free of charge*. This newsletter does not advocate or promote any one of these opportunities but shares with you a couple of recognized programs that parents might find helpful.

The first is the McGruff SafeGuard program from the National Crime Prevention Council. This is different from the typical website blocking service that tries to control where kids can go on the Internet. Their program helps parents see and understand what kids are doing on the Internet and who they are doing it

with. It monitors all website visits; MySpace/ FaceBook and social network activity; chat and instant message conversations, search engine phrases, Emails sent on popular systems, (including AOL, Yahoo, MSN and Hotmail) and tracks total hours spent online.

The McGruff system installs on your child's PC and you can monitor remotely. The service alerts parents to problems such as internet predators, dangerous behavior, underage/illicit sexual activity, and other misuses.

McGruff SafeGuard is simple to use:

Parents sign up for a free account at www.GoMcGruff.com

Download and install the McGruff software on each PC they want to safeguard

Once the software is installed on the child's PC their activity is automatically transmitted back to the McGruff website and stored for parents to review in private.

Balancing privacy and safety is a tough job so this system allows you to choose your level of monitoring. See everything your kids are doing online, or just be alerted when dangerous activity is detected.

More “FREE” Internet Safety Ideas....

For parents who want to know more about parental control software getnetwise.org is a comprehensive, searchable database of parental control software. Parents can search by interest, objective, for example, filtering, monitoring, time controls, etc. This site can help you

select a security program that is best for your family's use and budget.

Another web-site parents might find very useful is cyberangels.org

This site is filled with information for parents as well as special sites designed for kids. One is known as cyberangel kids

and another as cyberangel teens.

Finally, check out this website: www.ou.edu/oupd/kidsafe/start

This is a site that offers pages and pages of information for parents on Internet safety as well as personal safety tips for kids.





MySpace.com also offers three MySpace guides; Parents and families, school administrators and parents with teens.

There is also several additional software downloads parents can select from.

You will find an Internet experts list of Safety organizations across America and several books that are available regarding internet safety.

MySpace Is Like A Playground

It is useful for parents to think about MySpace, and other online sites and activity, in the same way we think about a playground we bring our children to when they are young. MySpace is like a playground, but for teens 14 years and older (and adults who choose to use it as well).

A playground is a wonderful place where children can have lots of fun. But a playground can be a very dangerous place without adult supervision, which can include adults being near by but not paying attention to what their children are doing. Worse is the situation

where children are at play and there is no parental or adult guardian presence whatsoever.

Until very recently MySpace was like an unsupervised playground but this situation is changing. The company that runs MySpace is taking measures to better protect children however there is no substitute for an informed and concerned parent. Parents are encouraged to go MySpace.com and here you will find:

ParentCare software that can be downloaded free of charge. This software is designed to

help parents safeguard their teens. ParentCare can determine if their teen has a MySpace profile, validate their age, username and location listed by their teen.

OnLine Safety Recommendations

- Put the child's online computer in a common area
- Review Screen names and buddy lists (names of those who can communicate with your child) periodically with your child
- No home pages for young children; supervised content for older kids
- No web cams unless CLOSELY supervised. Supervise any photo swapping
- Contact your InterNet provider regarding filtering programs and/or parental controls they have available.

Teach Your Kids.....

Inappropriate Contact –Teach kids how to recognize and protect themselves against contact with cyber-bullies, hackers, phishers, and predators. People aren't always who they say they are.

Inappropriate Content – This includes both content that is viewed and content that is uploaded. Help kids understand that the Internet is *forever*: everything they post online is tracked and stored.

Inappropriate Conduct – Because the web environment can feel anonymous, some youth become disinhibited . Teach kids that the Internet is a public forum: anonymity is a myth. Help them be the good person online that they are *offline*.



Child/Parent Internet Safety Agreement

This child /parent Internet Safety Agreement is a special agreement made by members of this family. It will be posted by the computer and each time we see it we will be reminded that internet safety is "serious and smart" and an expected responsibility of each person using the computer



1. I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
2. I will not give out my address, telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parent's permission.
3. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my Mother and Father or custodian along.
4. If I get a message that is mean or makes me feel uncomfortable I will not respond. It is not my fault if I get a message like that and I will tell my parents if I do.
5. I will work with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and areas that I am allowed to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

Child

Parents/Custodian

Definitions:

Cyber bully: involves the use of communication and technology to support deliberate, repeated, hostile behavior by an individual or group; meant to harm

Hacker: a person who breaks into computers

Phishers: the sender is attempting to trick the recipient into revealing confidential information.

Predators: build on-line trust and intimacy to establish relationships with young, inexperienced youth. On-line predators try to seduce their targets.