

S U S I

INTERNET

- SAFER USE OF SERVICES ON THE

NEWSLETTER DATE

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The Net is becoming a dangerous place

Each day the net is becoming a more dangerous place.

When you go on the net, its almost like you are a Gladiator stepping into the arena in ancient Rome. Recently, a report said that SPAM now represents about two-thirds of all e-mail. Your stress level

can rise as you struggle to keep SPAM, pornography, from your e-mail box and those of your family. SPAM is bad enough, but worse yet is a VIRUS that can hide inside of it. Some versions of this nasty can destroy your computer. Other versions

can sneakily send your private information to those "listening" at a far away point. Still other types of VIRUS can change your browser "home page" to someone's porno site, trash important files, or just "freeze" your PC.

It is ESSENTIAL that you PROTECT yourself from computer viruses on the net! You need a good combination of *both* freeware *and* shareware or commercial software. ONE or TWO software tools are *not* enough. Each tool, even the most expensive, will *not* stop everything. Below, we list

what many consider to be the *minimum*, in terms of protective software, that you should have on your PC.



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Material Unsuitable For Children
- Cell Phones
- Web Cams
- Bloggers
- Chat

Material Unsuitable For Children

Material unsuitable for children - pornography (including child pornography), racism, bomb-making instructions, depictions of violence and sites that promote alcohol, smoking and drug use - can easily be found on the internet.

Some of this material is more than just unsuitable or offensive, it is illegal.

What to do:

- Be cybersmart.

- If you come across anything that you think is illegal - leave the site and report it.
- Install filtering and labelling tools: These can block access to unsuitable web sites, newsgroups and chat rooms. However, none of these tools is foolproof.



Chat

Internet chat offers tremendous opportunities to meet and talk with people across borders, time zones and backgrounds. It is a great way to make friends and exchange information.

Chat is real time text-based communication across the internet. The most common versions are internet Relay Chat (IRC) - comprising multiple servers connected to each other - and web-based chat.

Chat is very popular among young people, particularly young teenagers. A lot of the same risks that exist in

the real world also exist online especially in chat rooms. Young people tend to be more vulnerable to these risks.

Most people online are friendly and polite, but some can be unfriendly and rude. A small number are exploitative and predatory, and there have been instances of paedophiles contacting children in chat rooms and by email.

TIPS:

- Talk to an adult you can trust if anyone says something online that

makes them feel uncomfortable or scared.

- Know how to protect yourselves from stranger-danger online.
- Follow the cyber rules and to protect your privacy. Make sure you know what information you can give out and where you can go online.
- Access to chat and IM programs can also be blocked with most filter tools.



Don't open email attachments from people you don't know, or messages which look "wrong" based on your knowledge about the person that sent them and their interests.

Web Cams

Many families have set up web cams with their computers, because it's an easy, inexpensive way of being able to see friends and family who are far

away. However, it is also a feature that requires a lot of care, particularly if a child's IM or blog profile is set to show that there is a web cam available. To be on the

safe side, ensure that the option to show a connected web cam is not checked on your IM ID.

Cell Phones

Mobile phones are no longer just a way to make voice calls. Many mobiles include cameras, sound recording capability, and can even track where you – or your children - are. Increasing numbers of mobile phones are also Internet enabled, which means that you can connect to the Internet, access email, and participate in IM (Instant Messaging) as well as chat. Mobile Internet enabled devices are permanently connected to the Internet and can be used anywhere. These factors present a number of risks for children

The 'always on' nature of mobile services means that children are more vulnerable to the risks, which include bullying, people making inappropriate contact, as well as the possibility that they'll access unsuitable 'adult' content.

TIPS:

- Find out how access 'adult' content and other services offered by your mobile phone can be managed. Such information is usually available on the carrier's website.

- **Talk** - it's ok to tell an adult if you come across something that worries you. (It doesn't mean you're going to get into trouble).
- **Remember** to your personal details private and to think about who you give their phone number to. People can't send them nasty or unwanted messages if they don't have your phone number.
- **Be aware** of the risks associated with the Internet, and learn how to deal with them.



Bloggers

Another forum that you can use to express yourselves on the 'net is by setting up and publishing content to a weblog, or blog.

Web space can be found through major portals (for example, MSN, Yahoo), as well as from dedicated blogging services such as LiveJournal, GreatestJournal, Xanga, Wordpress, Blogger.com, amongst a host of others.

A blog is web space that the individual can use to publish their thoughts, their photos, stories, rantings, ravings, links through to other sites, and so on. Blogging can be a wonderful creative outlet, and can help children develop their skills of expression and social communication.

As with IM, blogging services allow a user to set up a network of 'friends', and, on this basis, the blogger can customise who will see each of the entries made to the blog. However, this relies on the blogger remembering to set this option each time they make a post to their journal, as, with most providers, there isn't an option to make an entire blog private.

'Friends' can be people you already know, or they may be people who you find through a search of bloggers who have similar interests. Other visitors to your blog may have come from a 'random read' option or from the 'most recently updated' advice on the blog provider's home page.

Opening a blog will require

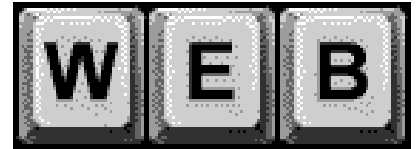
registration, and the provision of information such as username, email address, age verification (see the COPPA requirements), as well as setting out privacy options in relation to email addresses and IM IDs. In many cases, provision of personal information (such as location, or interests) is optional. In addition, some blogs will instruct search engines not to include your blog entries in their search results, if you tell them to do this. The way to do this should be explained on the sign-up page. You should still be able to do this by updating your member profile after registration.

Most blog providers also give the option of including a small image file (or 'avatar') which identifies you visually when you post in your log or comment on someone else's.

While a blog is a great outlet for self-expression, it can also feel deceptively private, as if you are sharing your thoughts with just a few friends. The reality is that posting anything at all on the 'net is not secure, and should be treated as if it were a public broadcast. It's quite likely that blog entries will eventually be read by strangers, including potential employers. Further, the content of all blogs is subject to the constraints of the law, in exactly the same way as general web sites and other offline forms of publication. This means so the unrestrained description of individuals or expressions of opinion may have may have legal consequences, such as defamation.

TIPS

- Read the terms of service, and particularly the privacy policy of the blogging service for information about how they use and store the information gathered during registration.
- Make sure you know to tick all the right boxes! Remember how important it is to keep your contact information private and secure.
- Keep in mind the realities of posting material to the 'net. Even though it may feel private, you may find that you have been publishing very personal information to the world at large.
- Do not post photos that might identify you, your friends, the school that you go to, sporting groups you belong to, and so on.
- Remember the need to communicate courteously – netiquette is just as important in a blog as it is in email or in IM.



Make regular back-up copies (onto floppy disc, CD, Zip drives, etc) of the files that are important to you. This way, if there is a virus-related disaster, you will have a recent copy of the files that matter to you and will be harmed less.

