EVERY MINUTE

Facebook users like nearly	Twitter users tweet nearly	Instagram users like nearly	YouTube users upload	Apple users download nearly	Amazon receives
4.2 million posts	**3** million times	**1.7** million photos	**300** hours of new video content	**51** thousand apps	**4,310** unique visitors

SOURCE: DOMO Data Never Sleeps 3.0, 2015

Parents' Guide
to Protecting Your Family Online

The Internet has revolutionized the way we work, live and play. It is an immensely powerful tool—and has served as a platform for educating our children (Kahn Academy) as well as a touchstone for societal revolution (Arab Spring).

The growth of the tools, books, knowledge and life experience on the Internet is rapidly evolving and the population of people with access to the Internet today exceeds 3 billion—or roughly 40% of the world's population (in 1995, it was less than 1%).

The Internet is here to stay. A parent to the next generation of digital natives, you need to learn how to keep your family safe online.

As incredible as the Internet is as a source of knowledge, it is an entity that has grown without the benefit of social norms or values. Also, the Internet—which is a complex and powerful tool—doesn't come with a set of instructions. Most parents provide Internet access, smart devices, and connectivity to their kids without guidelines or instructions. Would we want our community to do that with a new 16-year-old learning to drive a car—throw them in the driver's seat and wish them luck? Of course not! We need to establish guidelines and rules to ensure their safety.

That is where you come in.

This guide will help you to become more Internet aware. It is but one step in your journey to understanding your childrens' lives online and creating rules and norms that provide the boundaries that will protect them.

1. Educate & Mentor

The best way to protect kids today is by talking to them. Talk about online threats such as bullies or predators. Talk about the risks of sharing too much, on the Internet or with friends, from personal information to personal photos.

But since you are talking to digital natives, you should arm yourself with knowledge—do you know what the Internet is and how it works? Begin by educating yourself.

There are many great sites you should dive into!

Cyberwise (No Grownup Left Behind!) has a great mission—their goal is to "provide state of the art resources for busy grownups who want to understand how to help youth use digital media confidently and safely." In addition to research, videos and ebooks, the organization also provides classes to teachers and parents. The site contains materials on digital literacy that can help you get up to speed on the technology you need to know. And a section on social media that includes information on Twitter, SnapChat and Yik Yak—applications your child may have on their smartphone. The blogs also contain recent relevant materials and information currently in the news, and offers a good understanding of related issues.

The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children has a website called NetSmartz Workshop. The site provides helpful tips for parents sorted by various topics. Their Basic Internet Safety Guide covers topics such as cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate material, online predators, and revealing too much personal information.

Another excellent resource is Good Digital Parenting from Family Online Safety Institute. You can filter information by your child's age and access helpful videos.

Stay Safe Online has sources to help ensure your devices are secure and explains some common concepts around spam, phishing, malware and botnets. In addition, there is information on how to protect your personal information online, tips on parental controls for mobile devices, and about raising digital citizens.

2. Set Expectations

Be sure your children understand your expectations before they are given access to technology, such as when they can be online and what they can share. There is no better way to establish expectations than by writing them down, and developing a "contract" that you can share with your child.

The Janell Burley Hofmann site offers a contract that you can download and modify. The contract includes the time of day the device can be used and what sites are unacceptable to connect to. The site also offers additional rules you can use to address your particular situation or needs. Janell is a mother who wrote a contract for her 13-year-old son; the contract went "viral" on the Internet. It's a great resource tool!

As with every contract, the agreement should be mutual—whatever behavior you are trying to get your kids not to do (e.g., checking email or text messages during dinner) needs to be something that you (as a good role model) do as a parent. Kids learn good and bad behavior from their parents. Set a good example.

3. Centralize Your Devices

Take the initiative to have your kids' computers and gaming consoles in a central location in your home. This way you can keep tabs on their activities and just how much time they spend online. For mobile devices, create a central family charging station where all devices are stored before kids go to bed; no exceptions!

Four out of five kids/teens have digital devices in their rooms overnight—which causes sleep deprivation (late night texting with peers) and anxious behavior (and no ability to "disconnect"). Based on medical research, most teens require 9 hours of sleep a night compared to adults who require 8. Late night digital device usage can cause unintended consequences such as a disruption in sleep patterns because the bright screen lights from computer devices decrease melatonin, which in turn affect the bodies sleep/ wake cycles.

By establishing a family charge station—preferably in the parents bedroom (with the volume off)—it is much easier to monitor device usage. Having a defined family rule regarding what time to charge devices at night, also eliminates late night usage.

4. Communicate

Make sure your kids feel comfortable talking and sharing with you. Don't understand what apps they are using or how they work? Ask them. Allow them to teach you; give them the reins to step into the role to **EDUCATE YOU** about what they are doing online. Take on the role of "learner." Let them shine in demonstrating to you what they are doing online.

Simply asking your child "what apps do you guys use?" Or "how does this app work?" will go a long way in establishing open communications and will also allow you to download the app and connect to your child (especially if it is a social media app).

A willingness to learn will help you understand what your child finds interesting. Ask your child to help you understand "Mindcraft" and spend at least 15 minutes playing; engage with them on their turf!

Opening lines of communication and understanding how your child is using digital devices is important.

In a survey sponsored by OpenNet in 2011, the research findings point to startling results:

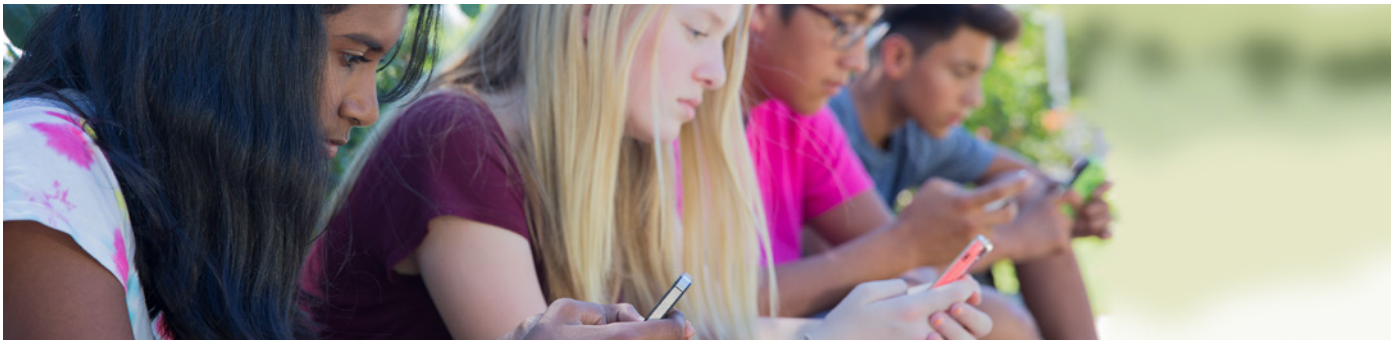
- 46% of heavy users experience cyberbullying on their cell phones, a much higher rate compared to just 23% of teenagers who are within the "normal usage" bracket.
- 88% of cyberbullies indicate they have been bullied themselves across wireless networks.
- Teenage girls are more likely than boys to make attempts at hiding their cell phone activity from their parents, such as deleting texts or hiding online activity. Yet, teenage boys are more likely to have parental rules for cell phone usage.
- Generally, heavy cell phone users and mis-users are more likely to hide their cell phone activity from their parents.
- 70% of parents set rules for cell phone usage, with 14% installing parental control software.
- Strong parent-teen relationships with high trust levels may help to avoid inappropriate cell phone activity.

5. Keep Calm & Respond Openly

If your child approaches you about something bad happening online, don't overreact. Instead, use the incident as a learning opportunity. If you punish your child for approaching you, they may not come to you in the future.

The most common offense that happens to children online is cyberbullying. Ninety-five percent of social media-using teens who have witnessed cruel behavior on social networking sites say they have seen others ignoring the mean behavior; 55% witness this frequently (PEW Internet Research Center, FOSI, Cable in the Classroom, 2011).

In most cases, your child's school should have a published policy on cyberbullying. If an incident does occur, you should contact the school and follow escalation procedures as needed.



You can also contact a social media hotline group, such as ICanHelpline, which can help resolve some issues that arise on social media related to cyberbullying, sexting and other personal reputation issues. Many larger city police departments have created special units that specialize in online issues.

Recently published statistics on cyberbullying are alarming!

- 25% of teenagers report that they have experienced repeated bullying via their cell phone or on the Internet.
- Over half (55%) of all teens who use social media have witnessed outright bullying via that medium.
- An astounding 95% of teens who witnessed bullying on social media report that others, like them, have ignored the behavior.
- More than half of young people surveyed say that they never confide in their parents when cyberbullying happens to them.
- Only one out of every six parents of adolescents and teens are even aware of the scope and intensity involved with cyberbullying.
- Girls are as likely as boys to either be cyberbullies or to be targeted as cyberbullying victims.
- Cyberbullying affects all races.
- Victims of cyberbullying are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem and to consider suicide as a result.

To help combat cyberbullying and other online offenses, talk to your children about responsible Internet use. Teach them never to post or say anything on the Internet that they would not want the entire world—including you—to see or read. Also talk to them about reaching out to an adult at the first sign of an online threat. Create a virtual "get out of jail free" pass. Let your child know that they can come to you without consequences; you will not take their phone away if they have made a mistake online, or are being cyberbullied (children who fear their phone will be taken away are less likely to disclose these acts to their parents). Give them the privilege of having you as their "trusted advisor." Encourage your child to speak out about bullying when they see it happening. Not reporting is tantamount to approving the behavior.

6. Educate Extended Family

Make sure family members are aware of your rules and expectations when your children visit in their homes. You may have created a cybersafe environment at your home, but what happens when your kids visit relatives?

The rules you have created for your children at home should be the same ones relatives use when your children stay with them. Provide your rules and expectations in advance, or do not let your children travel to relatives with their digital devices. It's important to be consistent with how these rules/guidelines are carried out. It's your job as the parent to ensure your children are safe, even when they are away from home.

7. Seek Resources

There are a tremendous number of resources online where you can learn more.

RSA Conference provides access to videos, tips, and guides in an effort to provide the most up to date information about online safety.

For Parents: Keeping Kids Safe Online

These organizations and websites provide valuable information that you can use to help keep kids safe in today's digital world.

CyberWise: No Grown-up Left Behind
http://www.cyberwise.org

Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI): Good Digital Parenting
https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting

Google Safety Center
https://www.google.com/safetycenter/families/start

NetSmartz Workshop
http://www.netsmartz.org/InternetSafety
(includes interactive games for kids and teens)

Think Before You Link
https://www.thinkbeforeyoulinkinschool.com/family

ConnectSafely
http://www.connectsafely.org

Common Sense Media: Choosing the Right Apps for Your Kids
https://www.commonsensemedia.org/about-us/our-mission/about-our-ratings/apps

Internet Safety—Newsround Caught in the Web (Video: Kid Friendly)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgCNGvL0g1g&sns=em

Enough is Enough: "Making the Internet Safer for Children and Families"
http://www.enough.org

iKeepSafe
http://ikeepsafe.org/parents

Stay Safe Online for Parents: Raising Digital Citizens
https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/for-parents/raising-digital-citizens

Net Family News
http://www.netfamilynews.org

Center on Media and Child Health: Ask the Mediatrician
http://cmch.tv/parents/askthemediatrician

Janell Burley Hoffman
http://www.janellburleyhofmann.com

For Everyone: Safety Resources

Discover how to protect your online presence, accounts, and networks. Advice, tips and resources for everyone.

STOP. THINK. CONNECT.
http://www.stopthinkconnect.org

ConnectSafely
http://www.connectsafely.org/safety-tips-advice

Google Safety Center
https://www.google.com/safetycenter/everyone/start

Stay Safe Online
(National Cyber Security Alliance)
https://staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online

For Educators: Teaching Kids & Parents

Resources to help educators promote the importance of understanding digital citizenship and online safety.

ConnectSafely
http://www.connectsafely.org/eduguide/

CyberWise: No Grownup Left Behind!
http://www.cyberwise.org

Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI):
Good Digital Parenting
https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/

iKeepSafe
http://ikeepsafe.org/educators

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
http://www.missingkids.com/KeyFacts

Think Before You Link
https://www.thinkbeforeyoulinkinschool.com/educators

NOVA Labs: Cybersecurity Lab
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/labs/lab/cyber