



India Chennai

[Http://isocmadras.blogspot.com](http://isocmadras.blogspot.com)

What is Safer Internet Day?

Safer Internet Day is an annual event, which will take place on 10 February 2009. It is organized by [Insafe](http://insafe.eu), the European internet safety network. ISOC India Chennai (<http://isocmadras.blogspot.com>) has drawn up this paper as Safety Tips for parents and Children and wishes to follow up with schools, organizations and individuals to work on the issue of online safety for children.

Internet and its immense wealth of resources for learning

The Internet has opened up the whole world for your child to connect to and to learn. Internet is a ocean of knowledge and there is a wealth of educational resources online. Your child can learn as much as any child in the best of the schools in any other part of the world could. The Internet offers your child all the opportunities to have a truly international education right from his/her school in India, be it in a city or in a village, and converts the computer at your home into a learning environment.

There are concerns about some dangers on the Internet. These concerns are real. Children and parents need to become aware of the “wrong places” on the Internet and follow some safety precautions, while not becoming unduly paranoid or unwisely averse to the Internet.

It is important for today's child to stay connected to the Internet. It is important for parents to help the child connect to the Internet, either by making it possible for the child to find a safe browsing cafe or by investing in a home computer if affordable. It is even more important for Schools and Colleges to take an even more serious look at getting / improving Internet Access in schools and colleges and encourage students to connect to the Internet liberally, spend more time online and learn collaboratively.

With this attitude, let's look at the dangers online just the same way we respond to the dangers in the street after dark. There are all kinds of people out there, some streets are always dangerous and all streets become some time dangerous, but do we lock up our children and tell them never to step out of home? We sometimes accompany them, at times guide them on where to go and where not to go, what to do and what not to do.

Just as we encourage kids to behave in certain ways when dealing with strangers, watching television, or buying magazines in the real world, we also need to guide them how to act appropriately online, says Cybersmart Kids of the Australian Communications and Media Authority. We will have the same approach to the threats online.

Need for Safety precautions concerning Children's Online Activity

Risk-taking behavior is a part of growing up Many preadolescent and adolescent children engage in on-going conversations with people they describe as "creeps" or "perverts." Some even go so far as to set up meetings with these people, says safechild.org

Children are vulnerable to the wrong kind of adults who have greater knowledge, experience and powers of persuasion. It is easy to tell them to follow rules, but not easy to get them to follow the rules. Children tend to be way ahead of parents on the Internet.

Safety precautions based on the types of Internet Activity

General

It is important to buy your computer from a reliable store and avoid buying used or refurbished PCs or laptops which might have the remnant of a malware known as root kit which is an 'infection' at the core of the computer or more commonly, might come with a defective hard disk and with a pirated operating system which is not upto-date. So, buy a PC or laptop from a reliable source, preferably a branded computer and make sure that the Operating System is original and licensed. (or one with an Open Source Operating System that is a recent release) Keep the software upto date and do not experiment with additional software that is not recommended. If the computer comes with an antivirus, firewall or what is known as a Unified Threat Management software, subscribe to the software. Get the boy next door (an IT-savvy boy or girl) to spend a few minutes a help you set up your computer and your browser - the Security, Privacy and Content filter settings.

The Australian Communication and Media Authority distributes content filtering software for use at homes and schools. ISOC India Chennai has made a request to the Australian Government and would try to make these filtering software available.

Searching

All popular search engines, Google, MSN and Yahoo offer content filtering. For example in Google.Com page you will find a link called "preferences". Click on the link and in the Safe Search filtering section choose "Strict filtering" or "moderate filtering" depending on the age of your child.

Browsing

Parental Center (http://parentalcenter.zks.freedom.net/html/kid-friendly_sites.html) features a list of child safe websites. In addition, depending on the age of your child you could encourage them to spend time browsing Wikipedia, Discovery Channel, History Channel, BBC Schools, BBC focus magazine, BBC learning and even some Corporate websites such as Intel or Microsoft that would contain a wealth of information. If oriented to such a selective list of sites to browse, your child will expand his or her list of sites to browse wisely and productively. Guide your child to explore child-safe websites. Here is a list of child friendly sites:

for littles http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au/cool-sites_littlies.htm

and for kids http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au/cool-sites_kids.htm

and young ones http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au/cool-sites_young-people.htm

Email

Your child needs to learn to write and needs to learn to use email. Depending on the age of your child, encourage your child to begin by exchanging mail messages with family members, school teachers and close friends with a bit of orientation about Spam. Some popular email services such as Gmail and Yahoo now have advanced spam filtering engines. However children need to follow the safety tips.

Instant Messaging

Your child belongs to a generation of kids who walk side by side communicating by sms or instant messages with the person on his or her immediate left, so there is no point telling them not to chat online. Guide them to use standard and safe instant messengers such as Google Talk and chat only with people they know.

Social Networking

If your child is under 13, it is wiser to guide them to stay out of social networking sites. In India Google's ORKUT is popular, Google is making it more and more safe but still a lot needs to be done about ORKUT India, as part of the ORKUT network is filled with people who are not what they appear to be. If your child is grown up, it is worthwhile to encourage the child to connect to rather serious social networking sites such as facebook, Ning or LinkedIn which are social networking sites that are not trivial. You can also encourage your child to take part in safe discussion groups at portels like Googlegroups.

---The following is compiled from Cybersmart Kids and BBC Webwise but rephrased at places and toned down on distrust ---

Smart Tips for the Cybersmart Kids

The first two smart tips are specially for the little Ones (all the next tips apply for all children depending on the level of their online activity)

1. Children who are very little should always go online along with an adult.
2. If you are very little, never give out your real name or address. If you are a little, make up a pretend name like 'Big Bear' or 'Goldie Locks' or use your pet's name. Don't tell anyone your password, never give it to anyone (not even your best friend). If someone writes something rude or something you don't like, tell your parent or another adult you trust.
3. Use discretion while giving out your name, address or phone number to new friends online. Remember, is like giving out the keys to your home. So, ask your parents before you give anyone on the internet your name or address, your phone number or any other personal details. This includes the name of your school, your photo or any personal information about your friends or family.
4. Never give out your password, because if someone knows your password they can often use it to find out other personal details.
5. Using chat rooms and message boards is a great way to find out fun things and meet new people, but some people you meet in chat rooms can also be dangerous.
6. If someone writes something rude or something that makes you feel uncomfortable in chat

or email, leave the chatroom and don't respond to the email. To avoid awkward moments, just stick to the public areas in chatrooms and if you feel uncomfortable at all, then just leave!

7. Tell your parent or another adult you trust if you see upsetting language, nasty pictures or something scary on the internet. Many things can happen online that make children feel ashamed or secretive about what they've seen or experienced.
8. People you meet online may seem very nice to you, but sometimes, someone who appears nice online, may be very different in person. Someone claiming to be a 12 year - old girl may be a 40 year-old man. So arranging to meet in 'real life' is not usually a safe thing to do. If you should ever meet strangers, meet them with your parents' permission and in their presence. Even if you are accompanied by an adult to meet a new chat buddy, always meet in a public place such as a café or shopping center. You should never meet with anyone who won't accept this rule.
9. Always ask a parent or a trusted adult before you fill out any forms, or give out money or credit card details. Don't accept any offers that seem too good to be true – such as a free iPOD. These are never true.
10. Be very careful about the kind of information you put in a blog, or post to a message board – if you choose to blog with your real name, don't disclose unnecessary personal details.
11. Accepting files or opening e-mails from people you don't really know or trust can sometimes get you into trouble. They may contain viruses or nasty messages that you don't want to read. So don't open or accept suspicious files or e-mails.

Smart Tips for the Cybersmart parents / teachers

1. Consider placing the computer in a shared room of the house so its use does not become secretive and hidden. Make your online use a family affair. Spend time online with your kids. Check out good sites together. The internet can be a fun family activity!
2. Help your kids use the internet as an effective research tool - learn about handy homework tips for kids and also good searching ideas.
3. Learn about the world out there. Kids are communicating in a diverse range of ways, from chat to IM, and from message boards to blogs. Learn how these work and what tools they offer to enlarge your child's network but take care to protect your child's privacy.
4. Teach your child to Trust people. But caution your child to be aware of online dangers, especially with strangers, particularly in chat rooms. Set house rules about who your children can trust, what information your children can give out and where they can go online.
5. Talk to your kids about their internet experiences, the good and the bad. Let them know it's OK to tell you if they come across something that worries them. Encourage children to tell you about anything that makes them uncomfortable. Fear of a parent or guardian being cross is often more frightening than the uncomfortable experience they've had online, but that is what some nasty people will count on.

6. Teach your kids that there are ways they can deal with disturbing material - they should not respond if someone says something inappropriate, and they should immediately exit any site if they feel uncomfortable or worried by it.
7. Teach children that information on the internet can be valuable, but sometimes not reliable.
8. Encourage children to treat others in the same way they should in real life by giving them an understanding of Netiquette.
9. Know the best ways of avoiding spam.
10. Consider using filters, labels and safe zones. ISOC India Chennai could help.

Acknowledgments

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Resources

<http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/index.htm>

<http://www.cybersmartkids.com.au>

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise>

Netalert

Virtual Global Taskforce

Chatdanger

Disney Online

Disney Online UK

www.acma.gov.au

<http://isocmadras.blogspot.com>

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Sivasubramanian Muthusamy
President ISOC India Chennai

+91 99524 03099

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<http://www.circleid.com/members/3601/>

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