



Social media, children and young people @ the library

– guidelines on safety, privacy and online behaviour

Social networking sites such as **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter**, are very popular with children, including young children. These types of sites allow children to be incredibly creative online, to keep in touch with their friends and express themselves using a whole range of different media and applications such as video, photos, music, and chat.

Advice on safety, privacy and behaving for children and young people

The internet is a great place to learn, discover, communicate and have fun. But, just as in the real world, there are some risks as well as great benefits. Please take note of the tips below to help you and your family to stay safe online.

1. What does your digital footprint look like?

Think before you post! Everything you put online stays there and becomes your “digital footprint” which can be seen by anyone. Remember that something you post today may be read by someone in 5 or 10 years of time. Will it paint the best picture of you?

2. i h8 u

Always treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you are the victim of cyber-bullying, tell a trusted adult – someone who can help you. Don’t suffer in silence and, if you do receive a nasty text or image be sure to keep the evidence!

3. Who are you talking to?

Be a responsible net citizen – remember that people who you only know online are still strangers. It is important to keep online friends online – don’t meet up

with online friends in the real world without talking to an adult you trust first.

4. How can you report a problem?

If something goes wrong and you feel uncomfortable or upset when you are online, there are things you can do. Tell your parents and the library staff or another trusted adult. Check for a report abuse button on the site you are on, or contact the helpline. Contact the library staff and ask for help.

Message for parents

The library staff at your library has an important role to play when it comes to educate you about children's use of social media.

The library staff at your library can inform you about the differences between the various social networks and the importance of being aware of how your children act and communicate online.

The library staff at your library can act as advisors, and keep you informed about current trends in social media and ways of how to communicate with your children about social networking and safe chat. For example:

Tips for parents

Talk to your children; ask them to show you what they are doing online. Dialogue is the key to prevention, just as it is in the offline world.

Keep in touch with the latest online safety issues by subscribing to the Insafe newsletter at <http://www.safeinternet.org/web/guest/newsletter>

Most risks on the internet are about behavior, not technology. Your life experience is the best guide children can have in the online and offline worlds.

Message for librarians and other professionals working with children

It is very important that all users, and especially children, are able to experience the pleasure, and to understand the responsibility, of the free internet and social media use offered by the library. Information on internet use must be easy to understand and should be presented in different formats, for example, in text, images, verbally etc., and in different languages.

The libraries have an important task in helping to increase children and young people's awareness about their own behavior on networks and mobiles and to

give them the tools to understand and cope with the situations they may encounter online.

The world of digital media is a natural part of children and young people's reality today, and, as libraries and library staff, we have to relate to this fact. Library staff should have knowledge and skills to facilitate the use of digital media and to address the specific situations that may arise when online media is in use.

By giving children information, opportunity and support to navigate the network and mobiles, you help to prevent children and young people being exposed to negative and harmful experiences online.

Library roles:

- Give access to the internet and social media
- Teach children safety , privacy and online behaviour
- Provide information, instruction and guidance material for parents
- Help children and parents to deal with problematic situations
- Provide clear information about the law in this area

Library staff has an important role to play in educating parents about children's use of social media.

Library staff can encourage parents and children to sit down and explore the social networks together.

Together with the parents library staff can act as advisors and inform the parents about current trends in social media and how parents should communicate with their children about social networking and safe chat.

As a member of library staff it is really important to familiarize yourself with social networking services. Most sites stipulate a minimum user age of 13 or 14, although some interactive sites are designed specifically for younger children. A clear understanding of these sites can help you to ensure that the children using your libraries choose appropriate sites and use them in a safe and constructive way.

FAQ

Q. How can librarians improve their skills about social media?

A. Learn from one another, other professionals and youngsters

Q. Where can I report illegal content?

A. Illegal content can be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation which is the hotline in several countries

Q. Who can I speak to if I have concerns about something that is happening online?

A. Speak to your parents or a trusted adult or call the helpline.

<http://www.esafetykit.net/index2.html>

Q. Where can I find out more information about how to keep my family safe online?

A. Visit your safer internet awareness centre's website and use our online family e-safety kit at www.esafetykit.net.

You can also find more information at www.saferinternet.org

Insafe is a European network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the internet and mobile devices to young people. It is co-funded by the **Safer Internet Programme**.

Further information is available from www.saferinternet.org

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