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THE INTERNET
Be safe, not sorry

Personal Journals

THE OBJECTIVES

- To understand what is a personal web page.

- Identify and the awareness of the potential dangers of bullying via the internet, email and text messages and video on mobile phones.

- Advice on what to do to be safe.

THE WEB

One of the great things about the Internet is the opportunity for anyone to publish something of their own, whether that be web pages about their favourite sports team or music celebrity, personal or family news.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

- What is social networking?

- So how do you create a personal website?

- Can anyone do it?

- What has this got to do with you?

SOCIAL NETWORKING

- A *social network* is specifically focused on the building of personal web pages for whatever purpose. There are over three hundred known social networking web sites.

- These web services have many names but commonly they are known as *blogs blogging*, *personal web pages* and *personal journal's* and *Chatrooms.*

POPULAR EXAMPLES

- My Space

- The Student Centre

- Friendster

- Faceparty

- Bebo

- ProfileHeaven

- Xanga

HOW POPULAR

Some examples of popular web journals

- My Space is the most popular with 70 million users. General topics but mostly pages covering music, chat, gossip, dating and school.

- Bebo has 22 million users. Primarily focused on schools and school life.

- Friendster has 27 million users. Advocating keeping up with old friends and meeting new ones.

HOW TO DO IT..?

- Its easy, every website will guide you step by step to create your own web page and then show you how to add photos.

- It will take a novice 5 minutes to create a simple page.

- Then you can invite other web users access to your page and even add comments and photos to your page.

- Your web page will usually be protected by a password chosen by you.

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THE DANGERS

- Personal information might be misused by other people who read these details on a web pages

- Text that is posted to a web pages is another area for care. Libel laws still apply to web pages

- Be aware also that having an email address on a web page often results in receiving junk emails (known as "spam", and which are often pornographic)

MORE DANGERS

- Photographs with names liven up personal web pages, but there are risks here. Identifying family members and their activities (e.g. the school they attend) makes it easier for someone to attempt to meet them.

- Publishing phone and fax numbers may result in crank calls.

- The Security of web pages is a concern, as insecure pages can be altered by someone else (known as computer hackers), changing text or adding obscene pictures.

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BULLYING BY WEBPAGE
What is it?

- You may be aware of recent episodes where people have been victimised via websites. One incident involved pupils setting up an offensive website about their teachers.

- But it could be as simple as a child calling names and spreading lies via her web page about another student from her school without realising that this information is viewable by the worldwide internet community.

BULLYING BY WEBPAGE
What to do?

- The victim is not always aware that these sites exist. However, when a child realises that they have been bullied in this way, the first course of action is to contact the Internet Service Provider (ISP). They can find out who runs the site and can remove it, if it is offensive.

- If the person responsible for the bullying is at the school with the child (victim) then let the Headteacher know.

- Any false accusations or anything on a website which you feel is breaking the law should be reported to the Police.

BULLYING BY EMAIL
What is it?

- Experts on bullying believe that many bullies tend to lack good communication skills and therefore the impersonal nature of email makes an ideal tool for them to victimise others. Unfortunately it is not immediately possible to check where an email has come from – you have to trust that the named writer is genuine.

- if a name is not familiar, it may be safer not to open the email as it may contain viruses or unwanted advertising normally pornographic in content.

BULLYING BY EMAIL
What to do?

- if the bullying happens through a personal email account, report it to the sender's email account provider – you can find this address after the @ sign, i.e. @HOTMAIL.COM

- if the email bullying is occurring in school or between students using computers outside school, then this should be reported to the Headteacher and dealt with through the school's anti-bullying policy.

BULLYING BY TEXT
What is it?

- Mobile phones are great – you can stay in touch with mates, chat to new friends, and have fun with cool ring tones, photos and video clips. But bullies can use mobiles to get at you any time.

- Text bullying is when someone abuses or threatens another by text, and it's just as bad as them doing it at school or in the street.

BULLYING BY TEXT
What to do?

- If a student is experiencing bullying of this kind, they should complain to a teacher or tell parents and be extra careful who they give their mobile phone number or email address too.

- check exactly when a threatening message was sent and when necessary, like with all other kinds of bullying, report incidents to the police. Do not delete or save the message as evidence will be lost.

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VIDEO MOBILE PHONES
What is it?

- A recent trend is to record an assault / robbery on mobile phones. This is known as Happy Slapping.

- These video clips are often posted on the internet and sent via picture messages or bluetooth between mobile phones within school.

VIDEO MOBILE PHONES
What to do?

- The videoing of these events by a person means in law they are aiding and abetting the offence being committed and therefore equally guilty of any offence. The Headteacher should be informed and the Police should be informed if there is video evidence of any crime.

- A recent example in North London resulted in the school child taking the video being found guilty of the offence along side those that had committed the assault.

GOOD PRACTICE

How to stay safe

- Although keeping a blog offers potential benefits including improved writing skills and communication, it's important to educate kids about the Internet and blogging

- The following are some general tips relevant to being safe on the internet

GOOD ADVICE
PARENTS and TEACHERS

- Establish rules for online use with kids and be diligent.

- Screen what your kids plan to post before they post it. Seemingly innocuous information, such as a school mascot and town photo, could be put together to reveal which school the author goes to.

- Ask yourself (and instruct your kids to do the same) whether you are comfortable showing the information to a stranger. If in doubt, take it out.

- Evaluate the blogging service and find out if it offers private, password-protected blogs.

- Save the Web address of your child's blog and review it on a regular basis.

- Check out other blogs to find positive examples for your kids to emulate.

GOOD ADVICE
CHILDREN

- Never offer any personal information including your last name, contact information, home address, phone numbers, school's name, e-mail address, last names of friends or relatives, instant messaging names, age, or birth date

- Never post provocative pictures of yourself or anyone else, and be sure any images you provide do not reveal any of the previously mentioned information. Always remember to look at the background of a picture too.

- Assume what you publish on the Web is permanent. Anyone on the Internet can easily print out a blog or save it to a computer.

- Avoid trying to "outdo" or compete with other bloggers.

- Keep blogs positive and don't use them for insults (slander) or to attack others.

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EXAMPLE

- **Marcy's 13-year-old daughter is great at switching off computer screens. The two often argue about whether mum has the right to see what her daughter is doing online.**

- **But a few months ago, Marcy's need to keep up with her daughter's internet travels led to a discovery thousands of parents around the country are making, teenagers are among the most active internet bloggers, and many are posting pictures, names, addresses, schools, even phone numbers online.**

- **To see her daughter's site, Marcy had to sign up to MySpace, and then she made another discovery, almost all of her 8th-grade classmates had pages on MySpace. Marcy said. "There are pictures with their bums in the air, with thongs sticking out. They squeeze their elbows together to make their boobs look bigger." When she looked, she found her daughter's page, displaying personal information, pictures, identifying her daughter, her school and hometown.**

WEBSITE EXAMPLE - BEBO

- Cyber Bullying has become a big problem on Bebo since its rise to popularity, with many teenagers taking advantage of the anonymity of the internet to abuse and ridicule their peers. This problem is not helped by Bebo's lack of email verification in the registration process, which has made the creation of fake accounts very straightforward. Such accounts are often created solely for the purpose of bullying.

- Many secondary school students have been disciplined for comments made about teachers on Bebo

- RTE current affairs television programme Prime Time had a report on the 20th April 2006 regarding Bebo, also expressing concerns over the vulnerability of schoolchildren on the site, displaying the apparent lack of censorship of pornographic images and control over bullying.

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AND THE OTHERS

- Bebo is not unique and in compiling this it was found that all the sites hosting personal journal's could be criticised for the content allowed.

- My Space has caused many schools and public libraries in the US and the UK to restrict access to MySpace because it has become "such a haven for student gossip and malicious comments". Some private schools have even attempted to ban their pupils from accessing MySpace at home.

- Xanga. Feb 2006- A Michigan high school student faces three felony charges for allegedly taking photographs of two juveniles having sex. Then posting them on the Internet on the popular Xanga web site, allegedly prompting a student in the photos to attempt suicide.

LEGAL FACT

- For the purpose of legislation an electronic communications network is not only a phone but includes current and future advances in communications and therefore includes text messages, the internet, email and computers. Therefore a number of offences can be committed using these new technologies.

OFFENCES

- Legislation relating to content of a message.
  Sect 127 Communications Act 2003
  Sect 1.(1).(a) and (4)of the Malicious Communications Act 1988

- References to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person distress.
  This may be caused by more than 1 person where each person would be aide and abetting any offence.
  Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

OFFENCES

- Legislation relating to child abuse images

  Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales)

  Civic Government Act, 1982 (Scotland)

  Sexual Offences Act 2003: Key Changes (England and Wales)

  Section 46 Sexual Offences Act 2003

- Legislation relating to criminally obscene content

  Obscene Publications Act 1959 and 1964

- Legislation relating to criminally racist content

  Incitment to Racial Hatred was adopted into the Public Order Act 1986

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PENALTIES

- **Reprimand**

- **Final Warning**

- **ASBO**

- **Charged with offence**

  court to decide penalty imposed

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THE GOLDEN RULES

- Do not give out personal information too freely.

- Always encourage children to tell you of anything that upsets them.

- Keep a record of all bullying incidences either by saving or printing emails.

- If an email or text message is particularly disturbing or breaks the law, contact the police.

- Check on your school's anti-bullying policy and whether it addresses bullying using computers and mobile phones. If not, encourage them to look at this issue, if necessary with support from your PTA and School Governors.

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USEFUL INFORMATION

- Barnet Police Schools and Youth Unit Tel 020 8733 5013

- Childline – Tel 0800 1111

- Internet Watch Foundation – www.iwf.org.uk

- UK based website offering advice about computers and the web. www.getsafeonline.org

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