Parents – Keep Your Child e-Safe!

Whilst in school your child will be using ICT systems that focus on so far as practicably possible filtering content that could be considered offensive or illegal, but what about at home?

What are you doing to protect your child?

How many parents encourage their children to use child friendly search engines or have altered/configured their home computers to filter content such that it is suitable for children's eyes? If you have not already done so then please read on.

Safekids.co.uk has much information on all aspects of keeping your child safe and particularly good advice on how to help keep your child safe when using the computer and internet from home. Please visit the Safekids web site (www.safekids.co.uk) for everything you are likely to need to know. In the meantime an extract from one of their articles is copied below:

Which Search Engines are Safe for Kids?

There are a number of search engines which offer child-friendly content only. They achieve this by filtering out inappropriate content which you, as a parent, would find offensive for your child. In general, this is achieved by using human beings to filter out the unsuitable sites.

The filtered sites include those which address explicit sexual matters, pornography, violence, drug use, and gambling etc.

Below is a summary of some of the most popular child friendly search engines:

Ask Jeeves For Kids

It is designed to be a kid-friendly way for children to search online with a focus on learning and educational entertainment. Ask for Kids uses natural-language technology that allows kids to ask questions and perform web searches, such as "When did Hawaii become a state?" or "What's it like to live in space?" or even "Convert 122 inches into feet" in the same way they would ask a parent, friend or teacher.

Yahoo Kids!

www.kids.yahoo.com – the Yahoo for kids is designed for ages 7 to 12. All of the sites are hand-picked to be appropriate for children. Also, unlike normal Yahoo, searches will not bring back matches found by crawling the web, if there is no match from within the Yahooligan listings. This prevents possibly objectionable sites from slipping onto the screen.

Filtering Options

Most major search engines including Google, Yahoo (in the main) and MSN obtain their listings by crawling the web and then using advance techniques to determine search results. The fact there is no human review and categorisation, as with the child-friendly sites listed above, means it's easy for undesirable material to appear in search results.

As a solution, most major search engines offer the ability to filter the results to keep out pornography and other material that you would not want your children to encounter. Below are some tips on enabling child safe filtering in major search engines:

Google: Go to the Google Home Page, select Preferences (on the right of the search box) and in the SafeSearch Filtering section select the option for 'Use strict filtering (Filter both explicit text and explicit images)'.

MSN Search: Use the Safe Search Filter on the Settings page.

Yahoo: Set the SafeSearch Filter option via the Search Preferences page.

AltaVista: Use the Family Filter Setup page.

AOL Search: Doesn't appear to offer a filter, but enabling Parental Controls might have an impact on web search matches.

Ask Jeeves: Use options for Content Filtering on the Your Settings page or try Ask For Kids.

Lycos: Use the Adult Filter section of the Advanced Search Filters page.

Filtering and Blocking Software

One alternative option is filtering software which works across the entire web, not just for search results. Most filtering software provides a decent level control for parents to determine what it and is not allowed for the kids to see. CyberPatrol and NetNanny are two of the most widely used programs for this type of control.

This article may be found in full at:
http://www.safekids.co.uk/ChildFriendlySearchEngines.html

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