

Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

In today's modern society the typical teenager has all the modern gadgets and gizmos. From iPods to laptops, the high-tech market feeds the needs of the younger generation. It is all too easy to think your kids are being nice and quiet in their bedrooms doing their homework on the computer but do you actually know that your kids are safe whilst they browse the internet?

Years ago kids used to hang out on corner streets kicking a ball about, today they sit at home listening to music on their MP3 player or talk to their friends on computer chat messenger systems. It is easy to forget that the same vulnerabilities apply to the teenagers of today then of years ago.

There have been cases of online bullying and with mobile phones an every day item rather than a luxury all kids are a potential target. So how exactly can you keep your kids safe when they are surfing the internet late at night?

Firstly it is very important to talk to your children about the dangers of using the internet, make them aware of what potential hazards there are without scare mongering, after all the internet is a fantastic learning resource. A few basic pointers should be sufficient, such as instructing your child never to give out any personal information on the internet. Online fraud is a booming crime so keeping personal information secret is a must such as address details and bank information.

Teenagers are most at risk when it comes to the internet. They take bigger risks and are more likely to chat to strangers. A good idea is to advise your children that the person behind the keyboard is often a completely different person they seem to be over a chat client. We all like to think our teenage kids are more responsible than what we were at their age but the reality is our kids are even more vulnerable than the older generation.

Installing software on your PC is a good idea if you feel your advice is falling on deaf ears. There are many trial and free versions of parenting control software readily available on the internet that you can try. These have advantages of controlling the website content your kids visit and you can actually manually set various permissions such as allowing your kids to visit educational websites but blocking the sites you feel inappropriate. Setting times of the day where your kids can access their computers for internet use is also a good feature to use.

There are also more practical measures that you can do such as moving the computer downstairs where you can have a more careful watch on your kids' activities online. By trying to show concern rather than be a tyrant you should be able to strike a balance with your kids ensuring they have the freedom they want but at the same time knowing they are safe and secure.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

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