THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE OF YOUR CHILDREN

ONLINE TIPS FOR PARENTS

BLOCKING

Whilst your children are online they may come across websites displaying inappropriate pop-ups and advertisements. It's important to teach your child how to delete pop-ups. Knowing how to block a website can stop them from being targeted by spammers who use adware and popups to attack their computer. Try visiting some of your children's favourite websites to find out if personal data is shared and if there are any inappropriate advertisements. There are two options which can help you to control the content your children see when they are online:

1 FILTERING AND BLOCKING

You can choose to **filter and block** any content you may find inappropriate for your child. You can prevent access to certain websites, words and images in order to avoid children coming across inappropriate content. Depending on the level of security requested, you can either adjust your web browser or use internet filtering software.

Adjusting the settings of your internet browser is the easiest way to block certain websites. When working with Internet Explorer, '**open browser**' and select '**tools**' on top of the page. Select '**internet options**' and look for the '**privacy**' tab. Under the privacy window, a button called '**sites**' can be selected, where the address of the unwanted site can be entered. This process will be different for other browsers, but can be easily found online. Please note that changing browser settings is not always 100% effective, so you may want to consider buying additional filtering and blocking software, which offers more extensive options of parental control. To help you make a well-informed decision on which tool would best fit your needs, you can see the **SIP Bench II website** of the European Commission. There you'll find the results of a helpful study on parental control tools.

2 MONITORING

You may prefer not to limit the online activity of your children but instead to monitor what they do on the internet. This way children are free to discover the online world on their own, while being supervised so you can step in when necessary. Depending on the level of monitoring, you may be able to track the names and nature of all websites visited, view any posts made on social networking sites, read online chats and instant messaging conversations and even scan your children's emails.

While parent's cannot always maintain a daily review of their child's online activity, most monitoring software offers the possibility to receive a warning signal when a certain website was visited, or specific content was published. Monitoring tools are not usually provided by a browser so they would need to be purchased.

Regardless of the choice you make to either monitor and/or use filtering software, you also need to decide whether you do so with or without your child's knowledge. It is important to weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of a certain level of control and to take into account the personality and age of your child. Very young children are most vulnerable as they usually lack the social skills to detect certain dangers when online, and are more easily startled when they come across harmful information. When dealing with the youngest, it is sensible to take measures to block unwanted content.

Though parental control might work well for young children, the situation is different for teenagers. With more online experience, they can more easily get around any controls that you may set in place. Moreover, teenagers are constantly striving for independence and the freedom to develop at their own pace. Secret monitoring or blocking of information without their consent might end up having the reverse effect. Teach teenagers how they can responsibly 'personalize their internet experience' by blocking unwanted websites and content. Give them the necessary skills to be good digital citizens and surf the web in a safe, comfortable manner.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

SIP Bench II website:
www.sipbench.eu

Find out more from the Insafe network:
www.saferinternet.org