School Safety Center

PARENTING AND INTERNET SAFETY:
FOUR THINGS TO HELP PROTECT KIDS ONLINE

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http://www.microsoft.com/security/family-safety/childsafety-steps.aspx

Follow these steps to help protect your children's privacy and safety when they're using the computer.

Step 1. Decide where your child can and can't go on the Internet

It's a good idea to visit some sites for kids. Pay particular attention when sites collect personal information. Read the privacy statement and, if you don't agree with it, search a little, to find a similar site that doesn't request personal information.

Block inappropriate content
One of the best defenses against inappropriate content is to block it before you see it. With Microsoft software there are a few different ways you can do this.

Windows 7 and Windows Vista Parental Controls.
Windows 7 and Windows Vista both include a rich and powerful set of parental control features to help parents monitor, manage, and administer their children's computer use-and help keep them safe.

Windows Live Family Safety. This software helps you filter information based on each child's age. You can also limit searches, block or allow certain websites, and monitor what your kids do online. You also have access to guidelines on how to help a child use online communications safely or how to talk to children about inappropriate web browsing.

Xbox parental controls. Xbox includes parental controls that help you restrict your child's ability to play inappropriate games and watch inappropriate DVD movies.

Step 2: Increase your security and privacy

In addition to blocking inappropriate content, it's a good idea to block sites and downloads that might be a risk to your security and privacy.

Set limits on downloads. Free games, free music, animated toolbars, and other downloads can expose your computer to spyware or other unwanted software. Depending on the ages of your children, you can teach them not to download software from unknown sources on the Internet or ask your permission before they download anything. This can help to keep unwanted software off of your computer.

A child might accidentally infect your computer with spyware or other unwanted software. Some popular sites for kids might try to download programs without permission. To avoid this, monitor where your kids go online.

Keenan
Associates

Use antivirus and antispyware software like Microsoft Security Essentials. Microsoft Security Essentials helps you detect, disable, or remove viruses, spyware and other potentially unwanted software. You can download it for free for Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

Create different user accounts. Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP allow you to create multiple user accounts for your computer. Each user logs on with a unique profile and his or her own Desktop and My Documents folder. You can give yourself an Administrator account and give your children Limited User accounts. Administrator accounts have full control over the computer. Limited Users cannot change system settings or install new hardware or software, including most games, media players, and chat programs.

Adjust web browser security settings. You can help protect your child through your web browser. Internet Explorer helps you control your security and privacy preferences by allowing you to assign security levels to websites.

Step 3: Monitor where your kids go online

It might not be possible to be present whenever your children are online. But it is possible to check later to see where your children have spent their time online.

By reviewing the History list in Internet Explorer, you can see all the places your children visited online. To view your Internet History, click the History button on the browser toolbar.

Windows Live Family Safety and the parental controls in Windows 7 and Windows Vista can also help you monitor where your kids go online.

Step 4: Remind kids not to talk to strangers online

Real-time chats, social networking, and instant messaging can be a great way for children to discuss their interests and build friendships. But the anonymity of the Internet can also put children at risk of falling victim to imposters and predators. To help minimize your children's vulnerability, teach them to take precautions such as:

- Use only a first name or nickname to identify themselves.
- Never disclose a phone number or address.
- Never send photographs of themselves.
- Never agree to meet someone they met online without supervision.

To help protect your children from being contacted by strangers while instant messaging, configure your software to allow only approved contacts.

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