



Welcome to the second issue of the ThinkUKnow E-Newsletter!

The Internet is a fantastic resource for people of all ages, but young people are among the most avid users. They can witness historical events from around the world in real time, access information on any given topic, and stay in touch with family and friends overseas.

Unfortunately, some people use these information and communications technologies (ICT) for dishonest and illegal purposes. ThinkUKnow aims to equip you with the tools to minimise your exposure to these risks and to pass that knowledge onto young people so that we all can have a safe online experience. The best defence is education.

New features of the ThinkUKnow Australia website

We've added a new page to the website which highlights 50 of the most commonly used terms in instant messaging (IM), chat rooms and SMS. [Visit this new page here.](#)

Please let us know if there is anything you would like to see on the ThinkUKnow Australia website or in this e-newsletter by [contacting us](#).

What technology can I use to keep my kids safe online?

There are a number of technology tools which are promoted as family safety software but they should never be used on their own. Best practice is to establish lines of communication with your children so that they are aware of the risks and the tools that they themselves can use to stay in control online. Maintaining this communication will improve the chances of your child coming to you when something happens on the Internet.

For children under ten years of age, using filters or parental controls may be appropriate. Children, however, are becoming increasingly skilled at circumventing these controls. If you would like to install a filter on your computer, you can visit your local computer software store and see what options are available. There are some versions which can be downloaded from the Internet, but not all of these are free. Try using a search engine to look up your options.

Your operating system may also have the option of turning on parental controls. These can help you to block certain websites, set time limits, control what games can be played and also provide reports on Internet activity. The controls vary between operating systems so it may be a matter of looking into what your system provides.

Your local IT or computer store should be able to help you decide what technology is most appropriate for your unique situation.

Time2Talk

Feedback from the ThinkUKnow presentations indicated that some parents, carers and teachers were unsure on how to approach the subject of the Internet with young people.

This section provides useful conversation starters for you to open the lines of communication with young people.

Do you use an instant messaging (IM) service, such as MSN?

How many people are on your contact/buddy list?

How many of them do you know in the real world?

Do you know how to block people?

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging application used by millions of people around the world. Users send *tweets*, text-based posts of up to 140 characters, updating other users on what they are doing, thinking and feeling. These tweets can be restricted to only those users who have signed up to receive them, although the default setting is to distribute the tweets to everyone. These tweets are then displayed on the user's profile page also. Posts can be sent via SMS, instant messaging or the Internet, making it very simple for people to stay connected.

How to stay in control in Twitter

The risks associated with using Twitter are the same as those found with other social networking and blogging applications. We suggest that in order to stay in control you should:

- Avoid sharing personal information - the sheer number of posts can allow people to piece together information about you which may be used to identify your physical location;
- Use a profile picture that does not identify you - use an avatar or a photo of an animal so that your true identity remains unknown;
- Think before you tweet - once something is on the Internet, you lose control of it. Don't use Twitter to cyber-bully someone, or to say something that you might regret; and
- Report spam to the Twitter Administration team.