



ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 3 Issue 2

Today marks [Safer Internet Day](#) for 2012. The theme this year is "Connecting generations and educating each other" and many schools and organisations around the world are running activities to promote this key theme. Here at ThinkUKnow, we believe every day should be a safer internet day and, according to this year's theme, we have some questions for you to think about how your family can enjoy technology safely and responsibly. Every. Single. Day.

What am I really concerned about?

When I was growing up, everyone's parents seemed to be concerned about eating disorders. When my parents were growing up, their parents seemed to be concerned about drugs. My grandparents' parents were concerned about being able to put food on the table! Throughout history, parents have always been concerned for their children, with good reason, but some of that concern can be masking a fear of the unknown.

The best thing we can do to help guide our children and young people into becoming ethical citizens is to learn reliable, evidence-based information and convey that knowledge in a relevant and meaningful way. Don't fear technology because you don't understand it, learn more about it and why your child doesn't seem to be afraid of it.

Are you really concerned about your child's use of technology because of what they and their friends are doing, or is it simply that society tells you that you ought to be

Time2Talk

This section provides some useful conversation starters for talking with young people about their use of technology.

Why do you think adults are so concerned about young people and technology?

What advice would you most like me to share with you?

What's the best advice you can give me about technology?

When you're a parent, what do you think your child will be doing online?

How can I help my child be more safe and responsible whilst using technology?

There are three key ways that you can help guide your child into becoming an ethical citizen. Firstly, learn from them. Find out what they do online and why they enjoy doing it. Open up those lines of communication and discover the environment your child is growing up in. Ask them to show you how to upload a video on YouTube or comment on a blog. Let them know you are interested in the life they are living.

concerned?

What could I possibly teach my child about technology?

We often ask young people to raise their hand if they know more about technology than their parents and the majority of the room will raise their hand. Ask them again if they know more about life and relationships than their parents and the number of hands significantly drops.

As a parent, you have much more experience in dealing with people, behaviour and nasty events than your child. You might not be able to tell them about how Facebook was built, but you CAN tell them about people and how to deal with unfriendly and inappropriate behaviour. At the end of the day, children and young people don't need to be told about the technology, they're often happy enough to learn about this in their own way, but they can find relationship advice to be invaluable.

Secondly, teach them about relationships. Share advice about dealing with confrontation and work with your child to come up with a solution that works for confrontations using technology. Show them that you're interested in what is actually happening not so much where it is happening. This will help your child feel more confident in coming to you with any issues without fear of having their technology confiscated.

Thirdly, lead by example. Be a positive role model for your child on what an ethical citizen looks like. Display those behaviours you wish your child to show, but also be honest when you make a mistake. Too often we focus on only children and young people as getting into trouble online when we know adults are up to the same thing. Make it clear that the safe and responsible use of technology is something that EVERYONE needs to work towards.

