

Click

A TECHNOLOGY GUIDE FOR PARENTS

TRANSFORMING THE CLASSROOM

Switched onto learning
with laptops

The global schoolroom

A revolutionary journey
for our kids

6 healthy habits for using laptops

Your questions answered

Everything you need to know
about your child's new laptop

PLUS great advice on technology

- Staying safe online
- Surviving cyberbullies
- A to Z: new technology in plain English





PREMIER'S MESSAGE

The Australian Government's Digital Education Revolution will deliver a laptop to every senior public school student and their teachers in New South Wales. The roll-out of laptops is opening up exciting new ways of teaching and learning.

The NSW Government will invest a further \$25.5 million in the provision of software, on top of the Australian Government's investment.

The laptops are loaded with easy-to-use tools that encourage students to be creative and to work closely with their colleagues and teachers.

In the classroom, students can connect to the internet anywhere and at any time. At home they can continue using their laptop to work at their own speed – and you don't need to have the internet at home for your child to use their laptop.

They can make videos, edit photos, and make presentations for class assignments and projects. Students and teachers can also conduct video conferences using the built-in web cameras and software.

Research tells us that students with their own laptops are more motivated and achieve better academic results – our early tests confirm this.

Students using laptops in class are better-organised and they communicate better.

Software that would cost \$5,500 if bought individually is included on each student's laptop, without cost to families.

The new laptops will be safe and secure, with filters to block inappropriate material and special coding to ensure they aren't a target of theft.

My Government is playing a vital part in rolling out the Digital Education Revolution in New South Wales, helping our students and teachers continue to lead the way in education in the 21st century.

It is all part of our plan to ensure your son or daughter is given every opportunity to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Nathan Rees

PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES



MINISTER'S FOREWORD

This year our senior public school students will enter a new world of learning as we help to deliver the Digital Education Revolution – NSW, funded by the Australian Government's National Secondary Schools Computer Fund.

By the end of this year, all Year 9 students in NSW Government schools and their teachers will receive a laptop. By 2012, every student in Years 9 to 12 and their teachers will have a laptop.

The laptops have built-in Microsoft and Adobe software, making it the most comprehensive roll-out of secure software in any education system in the world.

We are also investing in wireless networking and technical support for the laptops in all schools, as well as supporting teachers with the professional learning they need to use the new technology in their lessons.

This will result in tremendous benefits for your child's education. Students will be able to work with each other on lessons both at school and

at home, participate in video conferences, browse the world for information, and interact with their teachers – with all the necessary safeguards and security.

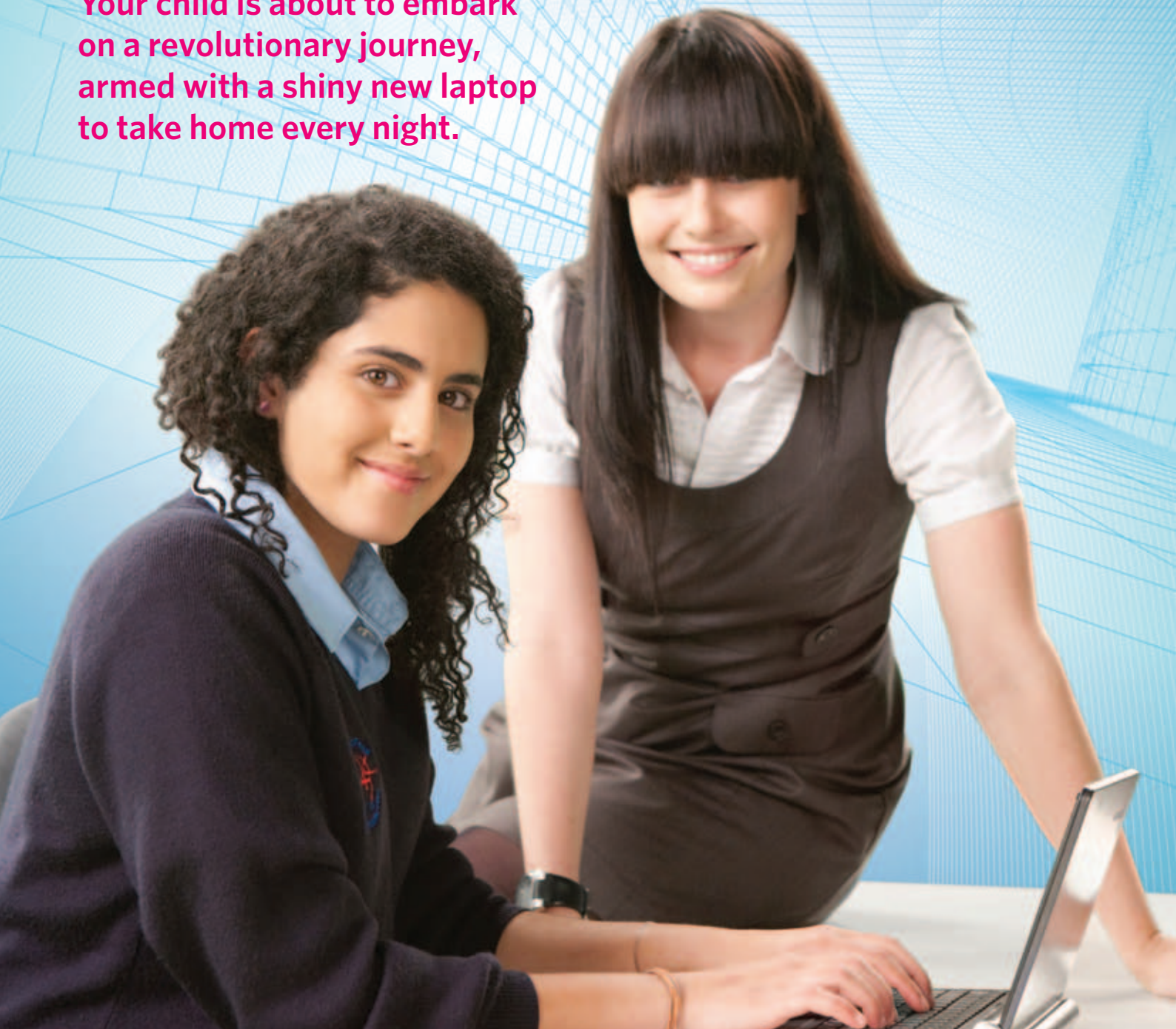
I have no doubt we'll see a generation of students who are more engaged in the classroom, and who turn up to school enthusiastic and ready to learn. And the new laptops will maintain our students' lead in IT skills when it comes to competing with the best in the world.

Verity Firth

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
AND TRAINING

TRANSFORMING THE CLASSROOM

Your child is about to embark
on a revolutionary journey,
armed with a shiny new laptop
to take home every night.



The Digital Education Revolution will bring a new level of engagement to classrooms, where today's students will experience education like no other generation has.

Trevor Fletcher, Deputy Director-General, Schools, says it's an exciting time for teachers as well as students.

"We now have a wonderful opportunity to bring together the three most important aspects of education in our schools. Our dedicated professional teachers and the excellent curriculum will now be complemented by engaging new technology in NSW classrooms," Mr Fletcher says.

Laptops turn the tables

Julie Haeusler, a science teacher for more than 10 years, has been helping integrate student laptops and other new technologies into Year 9 classrooms. As a curriculum expert, she has also looked at research from around the world on how technology changes students' experience of school and says the findings are amazing.

"The one thing that is common across all the research into interactive whiteboards and laptops for individual students is how engaged, motivated and interested in the school work most kids become," Ms Haeusler says. "And they're more likely to stay focused on the task, and more likely to do homework after school."

Making connections

Laptops, wireless connectivity and a wealth of teaching resources being created by the education department can bring learning alive for all students, even in subjects they've previously found difficult.

Ms Haeusler says there have always been challenging concepts that students find difficult to understand, but thanks to technology these concepts are now within their grasp.

For example, students frequently confuse the concept of "dissolving" with "melting", which is an important concept in chemistry.

"The reason for the confusion is that kids have real difficulties in going from what they can see (like blue copper sulfate dissolving in water) to a written equation that represents what they can't see – what's happening down at an atomic level," Ms Haeusler says.

"Now we have really easy access to animations and simulations online that show them what's actually happening in incredible detail. It really helps them make that connection."

The sky's the limit

Teachers talk about "teachable moments" – spontaneous discussions that happen in class, when children are excited about a topic and a well-prepared teacher can use that enthusiasm to explore the subject deeply.

Typically this could happen when the class has seen a great television show the night before, Ms Haeusler says.

"They come to school excited about it – for example, they've discovered that an octopus has blue blood. In the past you'd talk about it for a while and then get back to your scheduled class."

With laptops, the internet and interactive resources, the teacher can now take advantage of more "teachable moments" and ignite children's interest further.

The teacher may say to them, "Our blood is red because it has iron in it. Why might the octopus blood be blue?"

Real-time learning

At Bathurst High School, Year 9 students have already seen how their classrooms can be transformed.

Deputy principal Jenny Stirling says the student laptop test-drive earlier this year showed how easily the technology expanded learning possibilities in every subject area.

"In science, our students were using real-time data from the internet to track volcanic activity in North America.

They were also graphing data, videoing their own experiments and measuring reaction times – all using new technology."

While textbooks will never be able to offer consistently current data, students with their own laptop and internet connectivity have up-to-date information at their fingertips whenever they need it.

The Bathurst students discovered the laptops could enrich any subject. In Japanese studies, for example, they downloaded a kanji (Chinese characters used in modern Japanese) writing tool and were "actually writing with Japanese symbols in their Word documents and recording and critiquing their own speeches in Japanese".

"It gave them that opportunity to be in a different world," Ms Stirling says.

"Then we'd look at an online periodic table to determine what elements are blue. It could be related to copper, nickel or cobalt. Using the children's online research skills we'd find videos from internet sites like Discovery Channel or National Geographic and they'd discover

At Cherrybrook Technology High School, students conducted a biology experiment and recorded it with the webcams on their laptops. They also took digital photographs and transferred them to their computers via Bluetooth. Their experimental reports were created on their laptops, enabling them to embed photographs and video into their work, to give their reports greater depth.

Combining new technology and the online resources into a practical and meaningful lesson means the teacher's role is more critical than ever.

Julie Haeusler says teachers and students are now able to go beyond the traditional texts and resources to discover more about any given topic, and how it relates to the bigger subject area.

She says the opportunities to connect with students, teachers and experts around the world and draw on their experiences will enrich children's learning.

"Now you can turn an assignment into a blog and instantly you have a worldwide audience with feedback on what you've written. You broaden your knowledge when you connect with the global community. You start hearing different viewpoints and your learning opportunities expand."

that, yes, octopus blood is rich in copper, which makes it blue," Ms Haeusler says. The class could even go further to look at other elements, and learn that sea squirts' blood is rich in vanadium, making it green. (Yes, it really is.) The opportunities to learn are literally endless.

The global schoolroom

From this month new laptops will be delivered to your child and your child's teachers. Each machine will give students and teachers the tools to build exciting, rich and diverse school projects.

What is on the new laptops? Here's the list of software:

Imagine this scenario: a Year 9 science class is studying food. They're using the school's vegetable garden and tracking soil types, rainfall, mulches and yields over time.

Our Year 9 kids are from a wheat belt town in New South Wales and they're in touch with a class in a farming town in Idaho in the United States. They have decided they'll work together on the food project, compare their findings and publish their results.

The students attend a typical New South Wales public school and some of them don't have the internet at home. So how *do* they collaborate?

The answer is by using the software they have on their new laptops and interacting online through the school portal.

So how will our Year 9 students build their food project? They'll create a database in Access to collect and sort their raw data. They'll edit pictures of their research in Photoshop and report their findings with Publisher. They'll shoot a video to share with Idaho on YouTube.

They'll even create their own website using Dreamweaver and both the Australian and American students will make changes to the site using Contribute. And they will share their stories in a project blog. Using PowerPoint and Flash, they'll build and animate an end-of-year presentation.

Edit and publish a video. Animate a presentation. Collaborate online with a class in another country. It may seem incredible to parents that these are today's school projects. But students with access to technology can do just that.

	What is it?	What can your child do with it?
Adobe software	Photoshop Elements	➔ Edit, enhance and share digital photos
	Premiere Elements	➔ Create and publish video
	Acrobat Professional Extended	➔ Create, publish and share rich PDF documents
	Flash Professional	➔ Create and publish interactive animations
	Dreamweaver	➔ Create websites and web content
	Fireworks	➔ Create, edit and optimise images for the web
	Contribute	➔ Work as a group on web pages. Version control, work flow and publication made simple
Microsoft software	Captivate	➔ Create online demonstrations or simulations
	Word	➔ Create text-based documents (word processing)
	Excel	➔ Present, calculate and graph data (spreadsheets)
	Publisher	➔ Create visually rich publications (desktop publishing)
	PowerPoint	➔ Create presentations
	OneNote	➔ Record and organise notes, multimedia or information
	Access	➔ Collect, sort and organise large sets of data (database management)
Extras	Internet Explorer 8	➔ Browse the web
	iTunes	➔ Organise and listen to music
	Audacity	➔ Record and edit audio
	Plugins	➔ Include Flash, Shockwave, Java, Silverlight and Quicktime

The laptop also has applications for art, science, music and maths. Ask your school for a full list.

For more details on Adobe software, see:
<http://www.adobe.com>

For more details on Microsoft software, see <http://www.microsoft.com>



Bits and specs

Your child's new laptop has been custom-designed for school use. It's robust, compact and lightweight, and fits easily into a school bag.

But don't be deceived by its size. It supports a full range of leading software, has plenty of storage and lots of memory.

The laptops are wireless enabled, which means they can be used to connect to the internet in the library, the playground and in the classroom.

Built-in security means your child can't access unauthorised internet content. Your child can also use their school laptop to access the web safely from home if you have an internet connection at home.

The laptops will be remotely monitored and managed wherever they are. What's more, a stolen laptop can be disabled and the thieves tracked and prosecuted. These safety measures protect your child by removing any incentive for theft.



For the tech-savvy, here are the vital statistics:

Processing capabilities:

- Intel 1.6GHZ Atom processor
- 2GB of RAM

Memory:

- 160GB hard disk drive
- Two USB 2.0 ports
- SD memory card reader
- A variety of expansion ports

Connectivity:

- 802.11b/g/n wireless LAN and WAN
- Ethernet
- Bluetooth 2.1 with EDR

Communication features:

- Audio in and out ports
- Microphone
- Inbuilt webcam
- Standard netbook keyboard and touch pad
- 10.2 inch WSVGA 1024x576 TFT-LCD screen
- VDA port (video out)

Sign on the line

Before students take their new laptops home, they'll be asked to sign the Laptop User Charter. This is an agreement that they have read and understood their responsibilities. The charter must also be signed by parents or carers.

The charter includes a commitment to take the laptop home each day and bring it back to school the next day fully charged.

If you don't sign the charter, your child will be given access to a laptop for class use only. However, you are encouraged to sign the charter. The laptop represents an effort to expand learning beyond the boundaries and schedule of school, so it's important they are used at home. Using the laptop at home will also help to include your family in your child's education.

Taking care of your laptop

Encourage your child to look after their laptop. After all, it's about the most important tool they'll have in high school.

Here are some tips:



Six healthy habits for using laptops

Moving around

- Treat the laptop like you would your wallet. Don't leave it lying around. Avoid leaving it in the car, or if you must, lock it in the boot.
- Carry the laptop inside your school bag when travelling to and from school. To help prevent theft or damage, avoid using it in public.
- Be sure nothing is stacked or thrown on top of the laptop.
- Tell the school immediately if the laptop needs repairs, or is stolen, lost or damaged.

Using your laptop

- Don't drop the laptop, get it wet, or leave it outdoors. Avoid using it with food or drink.
- Put the laptop on a solid surface if you are using it for a long time. Resting it on a pillow or other soft material might block the airflow vents and cause it to overheat.

- Use a soft cotton cloth, like a handkerchief, to clean the screen.
- Take care not to leave anything, like a pen, between the screen and the keyboard when closing the laptop.

Remember: recharge!

- Recharge the battery each night. While charging, place it on a hard surface like the dining table or kitchen bench. Don't charge it near water.
- When using or charging the laptop, it's normal for the bottom of the case to get warm.
- Take care with the charger. Don't step on or yank the cord.
- Unplug the laptop if there's an electrical storm.

- 1 Sit on a chair at a desk.** This is especially important if using a laptop for longer than 30 minutes.
- 2 Keep a good posture.** Adjust the chair and laptop for a "neutral" posture. This means ankles, knees, hips and elbows are at about 90-degree angles and hands are in line with wrists.
- 3 Relax arms, neck and shoulders.** Most muscle strain centres on arms, neck and shoulders so try to keep these relaxed. Typing and using the mouse should be light, and hands and arms rested when not typing.
- 4 Don't sit too close to the screen.** Sit about arm's length from the screen, depending on individual eye conditions.
- 5 Take regular breaks.** Take five minutes out of every 30 minutes to rest both eyes and muscles. Stand and walk or change position to do other things like reading. Look at an object about 10 metres away for 20 seconds.
- 6 Make sure there's enough light.** Work where lighting is sufficient and make sure your screen is free from glare.



Your questions answered

What if we already have a computer at home?

Students will be using their laptops in class each day and are expected to continue their work at home. They should continue working on their laptops at home using the same files and software they're using at school.

What if we don't have internet access at home?

You don't need internet access at home for your child to use their laptop at home. They can work with files and software already loaded or saved to a memory stick (USB drive) without connecting to the internet.

My child already has a lot to carry for sport, music and classwork. How much does the laptop weigh?

The laptops weigh just over 1 kg and fit easily into a school backpack.

What happens if my child's laptop breaks?

If the laptop breaks, you should tell the school as soon as possible. Laptops and batteries are covered by a manufacturer's warranty. The warranty covers manufacturer's defects and normal use of the laptop. It does not cover negligence, abuse or malicious damage.

What happens if the laptop is accidentally lost or damaged?

If the laptop is accidentally lost or damaged, you should tell the school as soon as possible. You will need to complete and sign a Laptop Incident Report and a Statutory Declaration outlining the facts. The declaration will need to be witnessed by a Justice of the Peace or a solicitor. Your child will then be issued with a replacement.

What happens if the laptop is stolen or vandalised?

If the laptop is stolen or vandalised, you should tell the police and the school as soon

as possible. If out of school hours, you should notify the school the next school day. The police will give you an official number. You'll need this number before a replacement laptop can be provided. You will need to complete and sign a Laptop Incident Report. Your child will then be issued with a replacement.

If the laptop is lost, damaged or stolen, what will happen to my child's schoolwork?

It is your child's responsibility to regularly save a copy of their schoolwork, also known as 'backing up' their work.

How should my child back up their work?

Regularly backing up work is your child's responsibility. This should be done at the end of each session of study. They should save their work to their laptop and then save a copy to their online storage area called 'My Locker'. Schoolwork saved here will be able to be retrieved by them.

If your child doesn't have access to My Locker, they can back up using a memory stick (USB drive) or by emailing files to their own email address.

Are there any health risks using laptops?

Students will be taught how to use their laptops safely. This includes information on safe charging, posture and eye fatigue. See page 7 for advice.

What's to stop an unscrupulous student selling their laptop and then claiming it has been stolen?

All laptops have extensive hardware and software security measures. These security measures will disable stolen laptops and will help to track and prosecute thieves. As soon as any laptop is stolen or lost, the school will lock it down. No one will be able to log in to the laptop. If the laptop is connected to the internet, even with a new operating system, it will report its location.

Under what circumstances can my child lose the right to a laptop?

Your principal can decide to withdraw access to a laptop or the permission to take a laptop home. Circumstances might include your child:

- repeatedly not bringing the laptop to school for lessons
- repeatedly abusing the use of the laptop, for example

using the laptop to engage in cyberbullying

- not caring for the laptop responsibly
- having too many incidents of loss or damage.

A student in these circumstances will still—in most cases—have access to a laptop at school but will not be allowed to take a laptop home.

Is my child protected when using the internet at school? What about at home?

Your child is protected when using their laptop at school and at home by filters that block inappropriate internet material.

Can my child personalise their laptop?

Yes! The stick-on skin supplied with the laptop can be drawn and written on.

Will my child be taught how to care for their laptop?

Your child will receive guidance on good laptop care, including safe use and charging. See page 7 for advice.

Won't my child's handwriting suffer from using a keyboard all day long?

School will provide plenty of opportunities for handwriting, including under test conditions. However, effective use of a computer is a skill they will need in their post-school lives.

Will my child be safe carrying an expensive laptop to school?

Your child will be encouraged to keep their laptop in their school bag when travelling to and from school. Anti-theft measures remove the incentive to steal the laptop, helping to protect your child.

Won't students be able to cheat by using a spellchecker?

A spellchecker is an online editing tool. Students need to develop skills in the use of this tool, as well as the online dictionary, thesaurus and other editing tools, to become effective users of technology.

Can my child charge their laptop at school?

There will be very limited access for charging at school. In most cases, a student whose laptop is not charged will be unable to use it.

What happens if my child forgets to bring their laptop to school?

Forgetting the laptop will be the same as leaving textbooks at home. They can participate in the lesson but perhaps not as fully as otherwise. Repeatedly leaving

a laptop at home or bringing it uncharged could lead to a warning or losing the right to take the laptop home.

Can my child access the internet anywhere with their school laptop?

Your child can access the internet at school. School networks are wireless, which means within a certain geographical boundary (usually classrooms, the library and the school grounds), students are able to use their laptop to login to the school portal without needing to plug in any cables.

If you have the internet connected at home, your child can also access it there. If you don't have access to the internet at home, your child can still use the software on their laptop to work on their schoolwork.

Keeping up-to-date

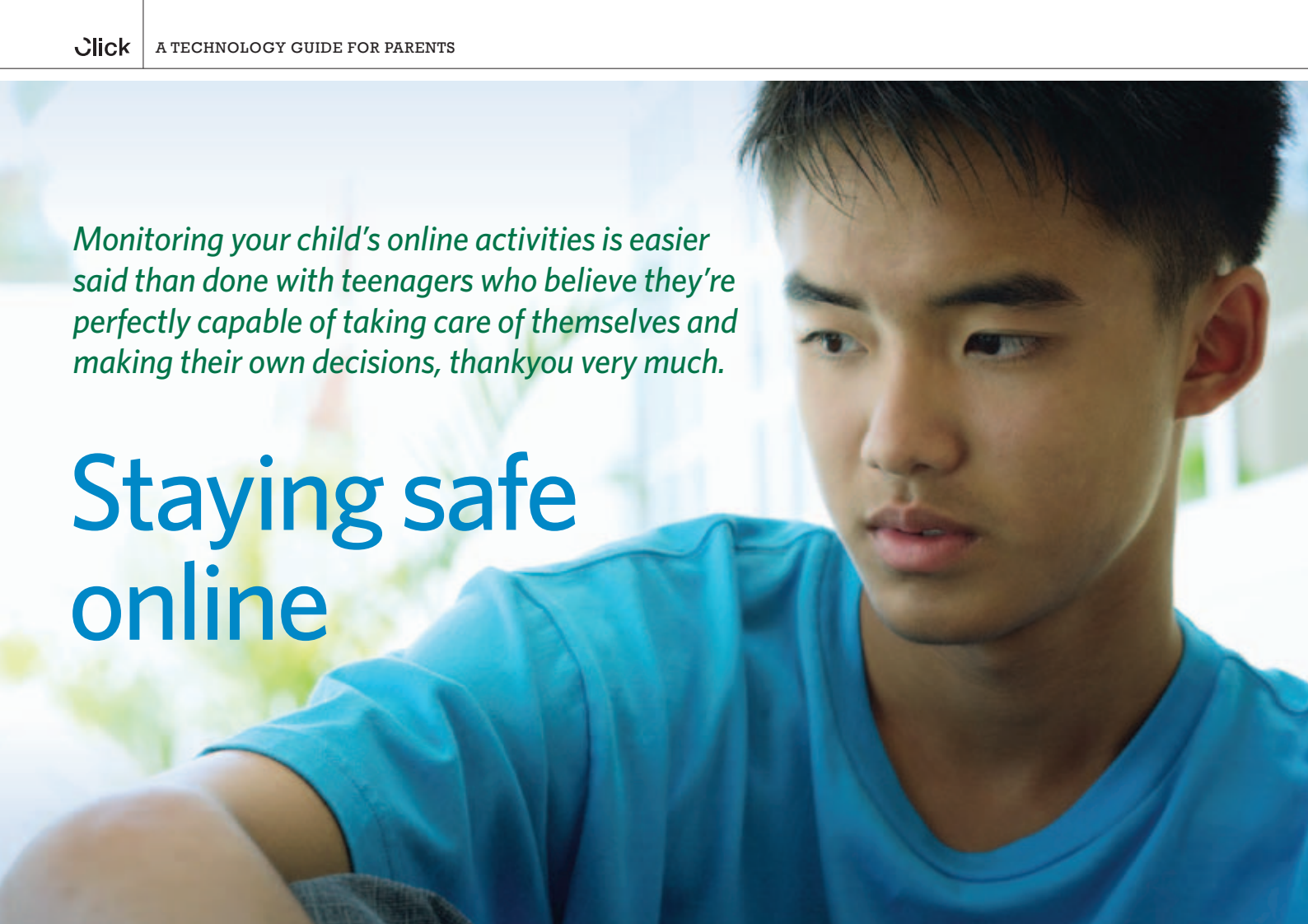
As a parent it can be daunting keeping up with new technologies, but help is at hand.

Click, our technology guide for parents, is available online:

- <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click>

For parents who want to develop their computer skills, TAFE NSW offers a range of short courses, for beginners through to advanced users. Courses are also run through Community Colleges NSW and the Centre for Continuing Education. Visit the following links for more details:

- <https://www.tafensw.edu.au/>
- <http://www.communitycolleges.nsw.edu.au/>
- <http://www.cce.usyd.edu.au/>



Monitoring your child's online activities is easier said than done with teenagers who believe they're perfectly capable of taking care of themselves and making their own decisions, thank you very much.

Staying safe online

The internet has absolutely changed the way kids socialise. It's an amazing world that allows your child to make friends with another teen living on the other side of the world, and to discover differences and similarities.

Just as you'd make some inquiries about new friends that appeared at your front door to spend time with your child, you'll also need to find out about the people they're meeting online. You also need to keep an eye on how much time they spend online, to minimise any risk to their health or safety.

Of course, monitoring your child's online activities is easier said than done with teenagers who believe they're perfectly capable of taking care of themselves and making their own decisions, thank you very much.

The challenge will be negotiating a balance – rules about where, when and how the laptops are used at home, so that you're both happy.

Shut the door on cyber predators

While predators are definitely out there, the reality is a very small percentage of kids will come to physical harm through contact with online strangers. Your child's new laptop will be installed with filters which will block pornography and inappropriate sites, but knowledge of potential dangers will help keep them safe on other computers and their mobile phones.

Clearly, the potential for psychological or emotional harm exists online for children, which filters will help prevent. However, nothing replaces parental supervision and education for kids about cybersafety.

Australian researchers* have found that children who didn't include photographs of themselves or their email addresses in their social networking profiles were less likely to receive sexually suggestive messages.

But most kids like to have some sort of image of themselves online – and avatars are a great

solution. They're cartoon-like characters you can personalise and put on your profile. Better still, they're actually heaps of fun – and often free – to create. Visit www.free-avatars.com. When it comes time to naming your avatar, choose something creative but non-sexual, like "Sk8trQueen", not "Sweet Sexy 16".

Keeping bullies out of the bedroom

Cyberbullying is another factor you need to consider in creating laptop ground rules. (See "Surviving cyberbullies" on page 12.)

Former Victorian police officer and cybersafety consultant Susan McLean believes computers and mobile phones don't belong in teenagers' bedrooms.

"By virtue of technology the bully not only follows you home but is invited into your house," she says. More alarmingly, the internet can give the bully direct access to the child's bedroom "the one place that they should be safe".

There are lots of ways your child can keep their online life, and keep their bedroom a place for rest.

Education and child safety experts recommend your child doesn't use their laptop in their bedroom. However, if for some reason that's just not possible in your home, consider options like:

- ➔ leaving the bedroom door open, with agreed random visits by parents
- ➔ removing the laptop (and mobile phone) from the bedroom at a certain time each night, so it can be recharged in the kitchen.

Lack of sleep can be a nightmare

Jennifer Hudson is a professor of psychology at Macquarie University whose research focuses primarily on anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. She says teenagers are prone to sleep problems, which will only be compounded if laptops or phones rob them of vital sleep.

"As soon as adolescents start to take an extra half-hour off their sleep to check their emails in bed, or just texting someone (and that's often happening throughout the night), that can lead to an accumulated sleep debt for the week," Dr Hudson says.

"We know when kids don't get enough sleep that impacts on their mental health, their functioning at school and their relationships."

She suggests creating a technology curfew when computers and phones are removed and recharged in the kitchen overnight.

Setting rules your teen will keep

As if changing sleep patterns wasn't enough to make your child's life more challenging, the flood of hormones, new brain development, peer pressure and a growing desire for independence also start at this age.

However, Dr Hudson suggests some strategies to help you make realistic rules your child can agree to and keep.

1. Keep the lines of communication open.

Negotiation with your teen relies on having a good relationship. The way to maintain your relationship is by regularly spending time together, such as family meal times.

"In our busy lives it can be difficult to find time to spend together, particularly when the adolescent is resistant to that because they

Your child's new laptop will be installed with filters which will block pornography and inappropriate sites.

believe it's a 'daggy thing' to spend time with your parents," Dr Hudson says. By making time for your child, you're also making space for them to tell you about their life.

2. Decide together where and when the laptop can be used

If your child is used to doing their homework in their bedroom, they'll probably want to do the same with their laptops. Dr Hudson suggests shared problem-solving techniques to get teens onboard with your rules.

Tell your child you're concerned about their sleep and their safety, and ask them to help you write down as many solutions as possible.

"When you've both come up with a list, decide which ones you can toss out and which ones you can both live with," Dr Hudson says.

3. Be consistent with rules

The laptops are provided to help your child's learning, but they don't come with permission to override your decisions as a parent. While teenagers need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the "real world" also apply online.

"It's okay for parents to say 'No' to things like keeping laptops in bedrooms," Dr Hudson says. She suggests consequences for breaking rules could be loss of recreational screen time or other privileges.

4. Get involved and stay in touch

If your child has a Facebook or MySpace page, ask to see it. Google their name to see what they've posted that's publicly available. (If you can see it, anyone can, so there's no argument about respecting privacy.)

Discuss anything you're not comfortable with and suggest how it can be changed.

5. Make it safe to tell

Your child needs to know from the outset that if they are contacted by a predator or are being bullied, they can tell you without fear of losing their internet or laptop access.

The fear of being "cut off" from the online world could prevent your child from speaking up. If they know you'll listen without criticism, and that it's not their fault, they're more likely to confide in you.

If you suspect your child has been contacted by a predator, try to save a copy of the chat log (or whatever form the contact takes) for evidence. Call Crime Stoppers 24-hour line 1800 333 000 to make a formal complaint.

A great way to keep communications open and also keep an eye on your child's online activities is to ask them to show you around their favourite sites. There's a lot of amazing things online which have unexpected educational value, too. Your child will be using computers and the technology for the rest of their lives, and you're in the great position of being able to get them off to a safe, positive start.

Basic internet safety rules

- ➔ Never give out identifying information such as your home address, school name or telephone number in a public message such as chat or newsgroups.
- ➔ If you post photos online, use privacy settings to limit access to people you know well.
- ➔ Remind your child that people don't always tell the truth online, and they can't take anything at face value.
- ➔ Reassure your child that they can tell you anything, without fear of losing the laptop or internet access.
- ➔ If they get a message or email that's threatening or rude, tell them never to respond.
- ➔ Never click on any links that are contained in emails from people they don't know. As well as sexual content, they could contain a computer virus.
- ➔ Set a technology curfew.
- ➔ Talk to your child regularly about their internet lives, and review any rules that aren't working.

For more information on cybersafety visit:
www.cybersmart.gov.au
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click

*Online Child Sex Solicitation: Exploring the feasibility of a research 'sting'. Kasun Jayawardena, Queensland University of Technology, Australia; Roderic Broadhurst, Griffith University, Australia.

Surviving cyberbullies – what you can do



When we were kids bullying was usually out in the open, in front of other people. Or it included things like notes being passed around about you in class. As horrible and upsetting as it was, you could usually escape the torment at home.

These days with the growing use of technology, the methods of bullying have changed.

Some children will come home after being bullied at school, only to encounter more of the same from the supposed safety of their own bedroom.

Bullying occurs anywhere kids (and sadly, adults) socialise, and our kids are the first generation to socialise online through chat rooms, instant messaging, SMS and social networking sites like MySpace.

Kids today love their technology and there's no doubt it can be fantastic for socialising and learning about the world. But technology can also be misused and the impact of cyberbullying can be devastating as messages are able to be quickly – and permanently – spread to a wider audience.

Researchers such as Marilyn Campbell of the Queensland University of Technology have looked at how technology emboldens young people to bully others online “when they would not bully face to face”.

The anonymity bullies can enjoy through technology and the wider audience they can reach are part

STOP.BLO

Bullying occurs anywhere kids (and sadly, adults) socialise, and our kids are the first generation to socialise online through chat rooms, instant messaging, SMS and social networking sites like MySpace and Bebo.

of the problem, Ms Campbell says. "Written words can seem more concrete and 'real' than spoken words... there is less escape from the bullying, as it can happen anywhere and at any time."

Donna Cross, a professor of child and adolescent health at Edith Cowan University in Perth, agrees that the anonymity factor can also make cyberbullying more stressful for young people than face-to-face bullying. "At least if you're being bullied at school you know who it is that is doing the bullying, so you can stay away from them."

But with anonymous cyberbullying, Professor Cross says the victim isn't sure who to avoid. "If someone laughs in the playground, she wonders if they're laughing at her."

Don't shoot the messenger

At just 18 years of age, Tom Wood is a cyber veteran and has become something of an expert on cyberbullying – from bitter experience as a victim. Although he's still at school, he regularly consults with government agencies on cybersafety issues. He stresses that technology isn't the problem.

"The internet, overall, is a very positive and useful part of kids' lives these days – it is very important for education and socialisation," Tom says.

Understanding just how important technology has become in kids' social lives is really important, both in terms of understanding the effects of cyberbullying and

how it can be stopped.

To many kids, a fate worse than cyberbullying would be to have their social network cut off altogether, Professor Cross says. "It's an interesting phenomenon because we think that many children don't tell that they're cyberbullied for fear that they'll lose access to technology," she says.

Stop, block and tell

Experts around the world say the best way to beat cyberbullies is to STOP, BLOCK and TELL.

STOP: This doesn't mean stopping the victim's access to their phone or computer. When Tom Wood was being bullied online, he discovered the hard way that the first step is to stop engaging with the bully.

"For a while I tried to stand up to them and it just got bigger," he explains. "Eventually I learned to not respond."

Remember that every perceived criticism isn't necessarily intentional. Not only does the written word rob us of visual cues to get our point across, you can't hear whether the sender intended to convey playful humour or dripping sarcasm.

BLOCK: Blocking the bully and limiting communication to close friends is the next step.

"When bullying is done face-to-face, it only exists in your memory," Tom says. "With cyberbullying, the bad comments are physically there, and every

time you look at it, it can have the same effect on you of being bullied again and again."

For this reason, blocking the bully and removing the comments (if you can) are vital – but always keep the evidence in case you need to follow up later with authorities.

Through his website, The Wood Verdict, Tom has published a step-by-step guide on how to block bullies from your Facebook, YouTube, email and other social networks. See the website at <http://thewoodverdict.blogspot.com>

TELL: Tell your child about cyberbullying when they begin socialising online and reassure them that you won't block them from cyberspace if they're bullied. Make sure they understand it's not their fault and they're not alone in this.

Sites like MySpace and Facebook encourage you to report abuse, and have reporting provisions on the site.

If you believe your child is being bullied, tell the school principal. Whether or not the bully attends the school, your child's peers may be aware of the attacks and may be pressured to join in.

Tell your child that if they are bullied, or know someone else is being bullied, they should tell a trusted adult at the school straight away.

Every NSW public school has an anti-bullying plan for identifying, reporting and dealing with bullying behaviours for staff, students

and parents. Information related to bullying is also provided to school communities

Expert tips to bully-proof your child

- ☛ Computer savvy kids are less likely to be bullied, according to some studies. Knowledge is the best defence for you and your child.
- ☛ Keep the computer in an open area of the house – not in kids' bedrooms.
- ☛ Talk to your children about cyberspace; know where they're going and who they're communicating with.
- ☛ Reassure your child that they can tell you about cyberbullying without fear of being restricted from the computer or phone.
- ☛ Take cyberbullying seriously. It isn't a "normal teenage phase all children have to go through".
- ☛ Reinforce the stop, block and tell message with your child.
- ☛ Remind your kids never to post anything online they wouldn't want you or their teacher, for example, to read. It could be there forever.

For more information call or visit:

Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800
www.cybersmart.gov.au
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click
www.cybersmartkids.com.au
www.headspace.org.au
www.stopcyberbullying.org
www.teenangels.org
www.netalert.gov.au

"The internet, overall, is a very positive and useful part of kids lives these days – it is very important for education and socialisation."

Rules of engagement

Communicating online is different to normal conversations – it's much easier for misunderstandings to occur, for one thing. To make sure we get the best out of the new laptops and technology, there are a few 'rules of engagement' students need to follow – some are netiquette niceties, and others will simply make life a lot easier.

Typing in capitals looks like

SHOU



TING

Always, always, always back up your files – in two separate places if possible. And save your work regularly. There's nothing worse than finishing a major assignment only to lose it all!

Be polite. Always "speak to others the way you'd like to be spoken to". Typing in capitals looks like SHOUTING, so stick to normal "sentence case" when typing emails and messages.

Use appropriate language. Don't swear or say anything you wouldn't say in a normal classroom situation. Assume your online communication could be seen by someone like your parents or teachers.

Take your time to consider your responses. You don't want to send something you'll later regret. It's easy to misunderstand someone's tone in an email or instant message. (What might have seemed like a funny comment when it was being typed could read like a criticism or sarcasm when it's received.) If in doubt, ask the sender to clarify their meaning before you respond.

Consider using emoticons like ☺ or ☹ to get your message across more clearly. They can help people understand when you're joking and they also make the message look fun.

Choose passwords carefully both for security reasons and because they are sometimes visible to administrators – don't choose anything rude! And, of course, *never* share your password with anyone.

Never provide your personal information to anyone over the internet. Don't reveal your home address, phone numbers, parents' workplaces, your school or even your sporting locations online. Help keep your friends safe, too, by not passing on their information either.

Don't upload or send photographs or film of others without their permission.

Report any cyberbullying such as personal attacks, threats, inappropriate photos or slanderous information about you or anyone else.

Follow copyright laws and only download/import music or other files that you are authorised or legally permitted to reproduce.

Remember what goes online can stay online and be forwarded virtually anywhere. Before you upload a photo or post a comment, ask yourself if you'd be happy to have your parents see it. It could still be up there when your future employers Google your name before a job interview.

Don't reply to messages from people or email addresses that you don't know. It could be spam or a virus which might crash your computer and possibly everyone on your contact list.

Don't forward chain letters or spam – it only fills up your friends' inboxes and might stop them from getting more important information. It can also be incredibly annoying!



Connecting the internet at home

You don't have to be a computer genius



If you don't have access to the internet at work or at a friend's house, browse the links mentioned at your local library, community centre or internet cafe.

If you don't have the internet at home you've probably thought about getting it. But it can be a confusing experience.

Ads for internet services are full of jargon like "broadband", "dialup", "ADSL" and "VoIP". What in the world do they mean? If you're new to this or just need a refresher, take a look at the following guide to connecting the internet at home.

Your first decision is the kind of connection you want. This will depend on what services are available in your area and the level of service you think you'll need.

These days most people are opting for faster connections known as broadband. There are four types of broadband (see page 17).

Your second decision is who you'll buy your internet services from. They're known as Internet Service Providers, or ISPs. There are

many ISPs – see page 17 for a list. Who you choose will depend on how you want to use the internet and who is offering the best plan in your area.

Comparing available services and ISPs can be overwhelming. However, there are some excellent online services to help you do this. Go to the Broadband Choice ISP directory at <http://bc.whirlpool.net.au/> and enter your phone number. This will give you a list of services, providers and prices.

You may want to use your telephone service provider as your ISP. If so, ask about "bundling" the services you're buying for better value. Or you can choose an ISP without changing your telephone service. Make sure you shop around to get the best deal.

You will typically purchase a plan similar to a

mobile phone plan—that is a monthly cost over a period of time. Costs often depend on the duration of the contract. A long-term contract may offer lower monthly payments now but prevent you from accessing cheaper and faster services in the future.

Once you make your decision, your ISP will lead you through the payment and installation process.

Understanding your internet service

Internet services are measured in terms of the speed of access and the amount of data available for downloads. Usually they're expressed as downstream speeds and upstream speeds.

Downstream speed is the speed at which data is downloaded from the internet to your computer (like music, videos, and photos). Upstream speed is the speed at which data is uploaded from your computer to the internet (like your emails). Downstream speeds are faster than upstream speeds in most plans. This makes sense because the majority of users will want to download a lot of data from the internet but don't need to send nearly as much.

The term download doesn't just refer to the music, programs, photos and other files that you download from the internet. Every time you view a website, your computer has to download it to your computer. Every line of text, image and advertisement that makes up that page is downloaded and is counted towards your limit. This is in addition to the files and programs you download.

Other tips

- Look for all costs involved including installation and setup fees. Installation cost often includes the modem and the cost of shipping the modem to you.
- A plan with a low download limit will be the cheapest, but you'll pay a price for every extra megabyte downloaded after that (often around 15c/MB). The cheapest plan upfront may not be the most cost effective in the end.
- Many ISPs offer account management on their websites. This means you can

login and view your account details at any time.

- Download limits can quickly be overruled by enthusiastic teenagers. Rather than get a shock in the next bill, keep a track on your data usage by checking your account online during the month.
- Opt for an ISP who will let you change plans once you find out what your needs are. Some plans will decrease your download speed after you've reached your usage limit, instead of landing you with extra charges.
- You can get great discounts on plans if you're switching from one ISP to another or if you choose to have your home phone provided by the same supplier, so shop around.

Useful links

If you don't have access to the internet at work or at a friend's house, browse the following links at your local library, community centre or internet cafe.

Getting started with broadband:

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/broadband/broadband_for_consumers

Compare prices in your area

<http://bc.whirlpool.net.au/>

Some popular Internet Service Providers (ISPs) include:

AAPT phone: 135 005

<http://www.aapt.com.au/>

Internode phone: 13 66 33

<http://www.internode.on.net/>

iiNet phone: 13 19 17

<http://www.iinet.net.au/>

iPrimus phone: 131 789

<http://www.iprimus.com.au/>

Optus phone: 133 345

<http://www.optus.com.au/>

Telstra phone: 13 7663

<http://www.telstra.com.au/>

TPG phone: 13 14 23

<http://www.tpg.com.au/>

NOTE: This list is not exhaustive! There are many ISPs and the best one for you may not be on this list.

What's dialup?

Dialup is a common type of internet connection for home use. These connections work well but are becoming less popular because they are comparatively slow and tie up your phone while you're using the internet.

What's broadband?

Unlike a dialup connection, a broadband connection doesn't tie up the phone line and is always on, which means you're not making a phone call every time you want to access the internet.

What's a modem?

A modem is a small box—about the size of a novel—used to translate information from the internet to your computer. You'll need to purchase a modem to connect to the internet. A modem is typically the only significant installation cost. Usually the ISP will supply the modem and charge for it as part of the installation. You can buy one separately from an electronics shop but this can be more complicated.

What kinds of broadband are there?

The four types of broadband are:

ADSL – uses your existing telephone line, but you can still use the phone to make and receive calls while connected to the internet at high speed. ADSL is currently the most popular kind of broadband connection for home use

Mobile – a little like the mobile phone network, a wireless modem connects to your computer and communicates with the closest transmitter.

Cable – the fastest and most expensive form of broadband. It comes to your home through a separate wire, or can share your cable TV connection if you have one.

Satellite – used in rural areas when no other connection is available. The internet connection is made via a satellite dish connected to the home. Satellite connections can sometimes be high-speed in only one direction.



Blogs

What are they?

A blog (which is an abbreviation of a weblog) is a personal website that can be easily updated. Blogs usually look like online diaries, but can include pictures and videos.

How do they work?

Anyone can blog, and there are countless websites that provide tools to do so. Blogs are often free to set up and use, but may charge for more advanced features.

Why are blogs useful?

Blogs are a great way of keeping up with friends and reading about the interesting lives and opinions of other people. Good blogs often include useful links to sites of shared interest.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are blogging?

Explain to your child that whatever they write represents them and can be seen by anyone online. They should always consider the repercussions of publishing information. If they don't want you to read their blog, then you may have something to worry about.

Want to know more about blogging?

Try the following websites for more information:

www.technorati.com

www.blogger.com

<http://blogsearch.google.com/>



Bluetooth

What is it?

Bluetooth is a way of transmitting information between different devices, using radio technology. It works when the devices, such as your mobile phone and your hands-free headset, are within short range, but they don't have to be in line-of-sight with each other.

How does it work?

According to www.howstuffworks.com, when Bluetooth-capable devices come within range of one another, an electronic conversation takes place to determine whether they have data to share or whether one needs to control the other.

Both devices must have Bluetooth turned on, but once it is, the electronic conversation happens automatically. You may then be asked to give permission for the two devices to communicate.

Why is Bluetooth useful?

Bluetooth connections are wireless, and you can have several devices working together at once. For example, your computer may use Bluetooth to connect to your wireless mouse, keyboard and printer. Bluetooth uses little power.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using Bluetooth devices?

www.howstuffworks.com says that in any wireless networking setup, security is a concern. Devices can easily grab radio waves out of the air and with Bluetooth, the automatic nature of the connection means people could send you data without your permission.

If your child has a Bluetooth enabled mobile phone, there will probably be a preference setting for you to select 'trusted devices' – such as your hands-free headset – that can exchange data without asking permission. When any other device tries to establish a connection to the phone, the phone will ask permission before allowing the connection.

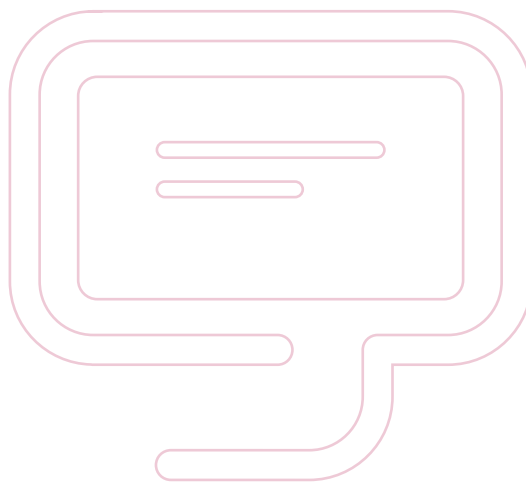
Alternatively, you may want to turn off the Bluetooth function altogether, so the phone becomes 'invisible' to other users.

Want to know more about Bluetooth?

www.bluetooth.com

www.amta.org.au

Blogs : If your child doesn't want you to read their blog, then you may have something to worry about



Chat rooms

What are they?

A chat room is a place on the internet where you can meet and chat with other people. Users may want to find others with common interests, or just chat with random strangers.

Depending on the chat room, you may be able to exchange written messages instantly, or talk into a microphone, and perhaps show video of yourself using an internet video camera (webcam).

How do they work?

Usually people register at chat room sites and login to the room. They are free to chat with anyone else. In general, there is no moderator and people can say what they like.

Why are chat rooms useful?

People use chat rooms to share information and discuss subjects of interest. They are usually free to use.






Why are chat rooms useful?

People use chat rooms to share information and discuss subjects of interest. They are usually free to use.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are going into chat rooms?

Most chat rooms require users to be at least 14 years old. Members can remain anonymous or pretend to be someone they're not, so you need to remind your child that the person they are chatting to could be making everything up. You also need to be aware of what types of chat rooms your child is going into and whom they are talking to.

Anything your child says in a chat room can be seen by anyone else in the room at that point in time. Remind your child:

-  Not to say anything they wouldn't want the public to know—this includes any personal information.
-  Never to arrange to meet up with anyone they meet through a chat room unless they speak to you first.
-  To choose a handle (online computer nickname) that doesn't give away their real name or age.
-  Not to reveal their location or school, and not to use photos in their school uniform.
-  If someone says or does something that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should tell you.

Want to know more about chat rooms?

Some of the more popular chat rooms include:

<http://chat.myspace.com/>
<http://chat.yahoo.com>
<http://www.stickam.com>

Chat rooms : Anything your child says in a chat room can be seen by anyone else in the room at that point in time

Filter

What is it?

An internet content filter is software that helps manage access to content on your home computer. Installing an internet content filter reduces the risk of your family coming into contact with something upsetting or dangerous online, but does not offer total protection.

How does it work?

Internet content filters offer a range of different functions to block, screen or monitor unwanted material.

The Australian Government's NetAlert website advises that unfortunately, there is no single action or internet content filter that does everything and it's not advisable to have two or more internet content filters installed on your computer at the same time.

Why are internet filters useful?

Internet content filters can be used to help block offensive webpages and manage content such as that from chat rooms. Some internet content filters can set time limits for online use as well as help you monitor the online activities of your children. Internet content filters can be individually set for different members of your family.

What do you need to keep in mind if you're using internet filters at home?

NetAlert warns that while internet content filters are a valuable tool to help keep you and your family safe online, they should be used in conjunction with other measures.

To stay safe online, it is also recommended that you have a security product installed on your computer to protect you and your family from spyware attacks, viruses, and phishing.

Want to know more about filters?

www.staysmartonline.gov.au
www.netalert.gov.au

Filters : Internet content filters offer a range of different functions to block, screen or monitor unwanted material





Phishing

What is it?

Phishing is a type of identity theft. It happens when you receive an email that looks like it is from a bank, or any other institution that you may have a relationship with (such as eBay), asking you to confirm some details. Generally, this is a type of fraud and isn't coming from the trusted institution, but from someone who wants to steal your login information.

How does it work?

You will receive emails from what looks like an institution you have an account with, containing instructions for you to follow a link and confirm your login details on their website. This will really send you to a fake website and ask you to enter your usual login and password details. Fraudsters running these fake websites capture these details to access your account.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are getting phishing emails?

Explain to your child that whenever they sign their email address up to websites, they need to make sure it's a legitimate website.

Don't open suspicious or unsolicited emails (spam); delete them.

Credible institutions don't send you emails asking for private information such as passwords. They also generally don't provide a link for you to 'click through' to their site.

Instead of 'clicking through', close the email and type the institution's correct URL directly into your browser. (Or find them through a Google search.) Then find their contact details on the legitimate site, and report the incident.

Use email spam filters to help protect you from phishing. Many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) now offer email spam filtering services, which intercept these emails and prevent them from reaching your inbox.

It's common sense, but worth reminding your kids: never send money, or give credit card or online account details to anyone you don't know and trust. Do not give out your personal, credit card or online account details over the phone unless you made the call and the phone number came from a trusted source.

Want to know more about avoiding phishing?

Try the following websites for more information:

www.netalert.gov.au

www.scamwatch.gov.au



Gaming

What is it?

Gaming involves playing any type of the many available computerised games. They can come as packaged software, can be downloaded from the internet, or may be contained within websites.

How does it work?

Most games come with instructions on how to operate them and what you need to do to win.

Why are computer games useful?

A lot of computer games require coordination and use of logic to work out how to win.

What do you need to keep in mind if your child is playing computer games?

Some games are for adults only. If a game is classified for 18+ it might be violent or sexually explicit. Games can also be addictive! Try setting a time limit on playing games.

Want to know more about games?

If your child is into playing computer games, find out more about the games and ask them to show you how to play.



Instant Messenger (IM)

What is it?

Instant messaging (IM) allows people to chat to each other instantly using online text messages.

How does it work?

Most IM services require you to subscribe and add contacts as 'buddies'.

What's great about Instant Messaging?

IM programs are usually free and are a great way for kids to keep in touch and help each other do their homework without tying up the phone.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using Instant Messenger?

IM is very addictive and may take up time that should be used for school work. Like email, there is no opportunity to take something back. Once your child has an IM account, they can login to any computer and start chatting, meaning they might not be under your supervision when they next logon. Also, they may be contacted by strangers who ask to be included on their buddy list, and you should warn them to only accept buddies when they are sure they know who they are.

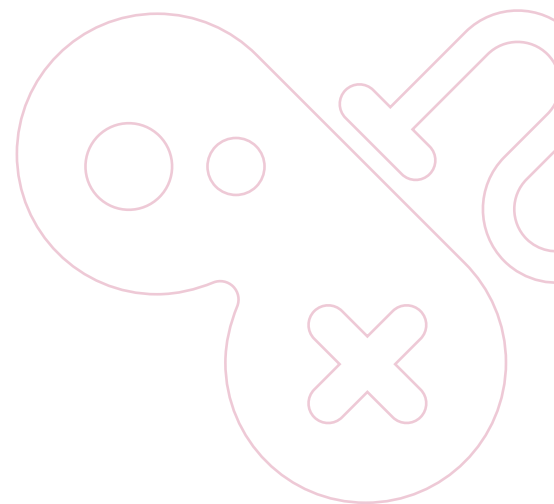
Want to know more about Instant Messenger?

Sign up and add your children as your buddies, and test it out!

Try some of these popular IM sites:

www.ninemsn.com.au and follow MSN links

www.aim.com



IM: IM programs are usually free and are a great way for kids to help each other do their homework without tying up the phone

Micro-blogging websites

What are they?

Micro-blogging sites are social networking websites that people can sign up for, and send out regular updates on what they are doing. The catch is, it needs to be said in a very limited number of characters. Twitter, for example, limits users to 140 characters and updates are called 'tweets'.

How do they work?

Firstly, you sign up to get a free account. Then you can search for people to follow—that can be anyone from friends of yours to celebrities or politicians that you are interested in, or people from your area. People may ask to follow you too, and you can accept them so they can see your regular updates. On your homepage, Twitter asks, "What are you doing?" and you start your tweets by answering that question.






Why are micro-blogs useful?

People use micro-blogs to share information and discuss subjects of interest. They are usually free to use and really easy to update quickly.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using micro-blogs?

Most micro-blogging sites have a minimum age limit of 13 years. Your child needs to be conscious of their choice of screen name—nothing that might provoke the wrong type of person being friends with them.

Anything your child says on a micro-blog can be seen by anyone else looking at that micro-blogging site. Remind your child:

-  Not to say anything they wouldn't want the public to know—this includes any personal information about their school name, address, sports teams, etc.
-  To use the settings section to protect their updates from being viewed by anyone who they haven't approved as a follower. This will also keep your child's updates from appearing on the public timeline.
-  Never to arrange to meet up with anyone they meet through these sites unless they speak to you first.
-  To choose a username (online computer nickname) that doesn't give away their real name or age.
-  If someone says or does something that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should tell you.

Want to know more about micro-blogging?

Sign up and start micro-blogging:

www.twitter.com

www.plurk.com

www.jaiku.com

If you want to include a URL in your updates, you may need help making it fit into the character limitations:

www.tinyurl.com

MP3 players

What are they?

An MP3 player (one of the more popular brands is the iPod) is used to play MP3 audio files. 'MP3' is a type of compression technology that minimises the size of audio files.

How do they work?

To put music onto an MP3 player, you need to either load your CDs onto your computer (a process called 'ripping'), or buy music online at places like iTunes.

What's great about MP3 players?

MP3 players can keep all of your music in the one convenient and portable location.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are listening to MP3 players?

MP3 players potentially have enough volume to damage your child's hearing. You can usually limit the maximum volume through the device's preferences. Pirate music has become a problem, so it is important to remind your children that copying music that they haven't purchased is stealing.

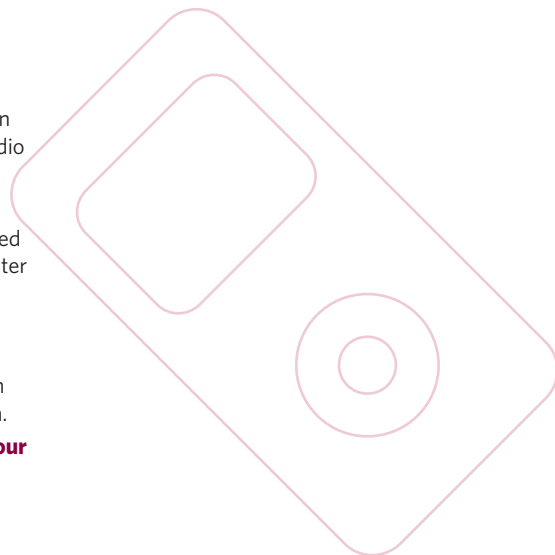
Want to know more about MP3 players?

Creative Zen – www.creative.com/products/mp3/

iriver – www.iriver.com.au/

iPod – www.apple.com/au/itunes

Micro-blogging websites : Your child should not say anything they wouldn't want the public to know—this includes any personal information about their school name, address, sports teams, etc



MySpace : Ask your children to be careful about adding strangers to their friends list

MySpace

What is it?

MySpace is all about social networking – expanding your group of friends by meeting friends of your friends.

How does it work?

You join MySpace and receive a webpage to do with what you like. Once your friends find your page, a note appears in their 'Friend's Space' section. You can click on any of your friends' pictures to go to their space. Users have the ability to block others from being their friends.

What's great about MySpace?

MySpace is a great place to meet up with friends, and share photos and stories.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are on MySpace?*

Talk to your kids about why they use MySpace, how they communicate with others, and how they represent themselves. Kids shouldn't lie about how old they are. MySpace members must be 14 years of age or older. MySpace take extra precautions to protect younger members and is not able to do so if they do not identify themselves as such.

MySpace is a public space. Members shouldn't post anything they wouldn't want the world to know (e.g. phone number, address).

Remind them not to post anything that could embarrass them later or expose them to danger.

People aren't always who they say they are. Ask your children to be careful about adding strangers to their friends' list.

They should talk to you if they want to meet an online friend in person, and if you think it's safe, any meeting should take place in public with a trusted adult present.

Harassment, hate speech and inappropriate content should be reported. If your children encounter inappropriate behaviour, let them know that they should let you know and you will help them report it to MySpace and the police if necessary.

*Source: MySpace.com

Want to know more about MySpace?

www.myspace.com

Photo sharing websites

What are they?

These let you share your photos with friends or the whole world.

How do they work?

Once you are signed in to a site, you can add your own photos and view other people's.

What's great about photo sharing websites?

These sites are perfect for people who never print their digital photos.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using photo sharing websites?

Anyone who is signed up can potentially view your children's photos. The more popular photo sharing sites have guidelines that ensure any offensive photos uploaded are removed as soon as possible. Make sure any photos of your children cannot be viewed in an objectionable manner.

Want to know more about photo sharing websites?

Try signing up to one!

www.flickr.com

www.facebook.com

Photo sharing websites : Make sure any photos of your children cannot be viewed in an objectionable manner

Podcasting and vodcasting

What is it?

A podcast is like a pre-recorded radio-style program available on the internet and can be downloaded to your computer or MP3 player. A vodcast is the video version.

How does it work?

You need to go to the podcast website and download the software, then click on the links for the podcasts that you would like to listen to.

What's the benefit of listening to podcasts?

You can download video or audio of any topic you like, from your favourite bands and radio shows to television clips.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are downloading podcasts/ vodcasts?

Check that the information/material that they are downloading is suitable for your child.

Want to know more about podcasting?

Try looking up a radio station website that you are interested in, and following the instructions to download the podcasts available. For example, ABC Radio provides great podcasts – www.abc.net.au/radio/ www.apple.com/au/itunes

RSS feeds

What are they?

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds are an excellent way for web users to keep up-to-date with news headlines or blogs. With an RSS reader, users can scan hundreds of news headlines from one location.

How do RSS readers work?

Web users sign up to a website's RSS feeds that interest them. Anytime that website is updated, a notice will appear in their reader.

What's the benefit of RSS feeds?

If you are interested in a topic, you don't need to keep checking the site for updates.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using RSS feeds?

Just be clear on the types of sites they are subscribing to – make sure they are appropriate for your child.

Want to know more about RSS feeds?

Try a free online RSS feed program, such as www.pageflakes.com, and add whatever feeds you are interested in.

SMS: There is still a cost attached to SMS so large bills will arrive if your child is a big texter

Sexting

What is it?

Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between mobile phones. It is illegal for anyone to take sexual photos of children and young people, and it is also an offence to pass them on – even if they were taken and sent by other underage children.

How does it work?

Because more children have mobile phones with camera functions, more kids are sending photo messages to each other. Sometimes sexting is the result of a prank, such as taking a photo in the change rooms to embarrass a student, or it can be images sent between girlfriend and boyfriend. These can then be forwarded on to other people, with the photographer and the victim unable to control where the pictures go. Sexting can lead to bullying, humiliation and even sexual assault.

What do you need to tell your child about sexting?

- Warn your child about the consequences of sexting.
- Remind them to think before they act.
- Tell your child that sending or possessing sexually explicit photos of underage people is illegal.
- Warn them about sexual predators.
- Learn how to use and monitor your child's mobile phone.
- Check the photo galleries on their Facebook and MySpace accounts.
- Give your child clear rules on what they can and can't do with their mobile phone.

Want to know more about sexting?

For further information call Parent Line 1300 1300 52 or visit www.community.nsw.gov.au Listen to 'Sexting – what every parent should know' at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click

SMS

What is SMS?

SMS stands for Short Messaging Service. It is also known as a text message sent from mobile phone to mobile phone.

How does it work?

All mobile phones have the ability to send SMS. Users create a new message using the key pad and send it to a number from their contacts list or just type the number in directly.

What's great about SMS?

It's cheap on many phone plans, and can be used to send important messages when you don't have the time to talk or it's too noisy.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are SMSing?

There is still a cost attached to this service, so large bills will arrive if your child is a big texter.

Want to know more about SMS?

Go to your mobile phone provider's website to view charges:

www.telstra.com
www.vodafone.com.au
www.optus.com.au

Tagging

What is a tag?

A tag is a word, or words, assigned to a piece of information (such as a picture, article, or video clip), that describes the content of the item, allowing you to search and cross-reference information.

How does it work?

You might tag a picture of a parrot as 'animal', 'bird' and 'colourful'. You might then tag a picture of a tropical fish as 'animal', 'fish', and 'colourful'. Later when you want to find information about colourful animals, you could search your tagged items for 'animal' and 'colourful'. There are websites that allow you to store your tags in one location, and for you to share your tags and see other people's.

What's great about tagging?

Tagging helps you remember your favourite webpages and cross-reference information you've found. By sharing and looking at other people's tags, you can quickly find even more information other people like.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are tagging?

There is no structure in the way people assign tags, so following some links could lead your children to inappropriate web content.

Want to know more about tagging?

<http://delicious.com>
www.technorati.com
www.flickr.com

Virtual worlds

What are they?

Virtual worlds are simulated worlds created on the internet that people can visit from their computer. 'Residents' can create a new identity (known as an 'avatar' – a 3D representation of themselves) and interact with others in real-time, in a relatively lifelike social setting.

You can socialise, visit places, even catch public transport. Businesses are also starting to appear in virtual worlds, so you can buy anything from real estate to clothing, using virtual currency.

How do they work?

Sign up and create your virtual self, then you can start looking around the world.

Why are virtual worlds so popular?

Virtual worlds are popular due to the pseudo-realistic nature of the websites. Building a virtual 'life' can be quite addictive.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are visiting virtual worlds?

Currency used in virtual worlds is usually purchased using real money, so there is a cost involved in buying goods and services – even if they don't exist in the real world.

Make your child aware of some ground rules:

- They shouldn't reveal their personal details.
- They should be honest about their age when signing up. Some virtual worlds won't allow children under certain ages to join due to the adult nature of the content.
- They shouldn't respond to any comment or action that makes them feel uncomfortable, but report it to the site administrators and parents.
- They should keep their parents in the loop about their virtual life.
- If they want to meet offline, seek parental permission, and take a trusted adult with them.

Want to know more about virtual worlds?

If your child is visiting virtual worlds, talk about it with them and see if they will show you around and how it works.

Popular virtual worlds include:

- Second Life – www.secondlife.com. The teen version is <http://teen.secondlife.com/>
- Zwinkytopia – www.zwinky.com
- Club Penguin – www.clubpenguin.com
- Millsberry – <http://millsberry.com/>
- Star Doll – www.stardoll.com – a virtual paper doll world

Wi-Fi

What is it?

Wi-Fi is actually a trademark owned by a group of companies, but generally it is used to refer to a wireless networking technology commonly used to link computers to other devices and the internet at high speed.

How does it work?

The Wi-Fi Alliance says Wi-Fi uses radio waves – just like cellular phones, TV and radio – to create reliable high-speed connections between computers, printers, gaming devices, cameras phones and home entertainment systems. You can use Wi-Fi in your home, at work or on-the-go at hotspots worldwide.

Through Wi-Fi technology, you can be in an airport, coffee shop, hotel and now a NSW public high school, and connect to the internet wirelessly if a network 'hotspot' is active. Wi-Fi also allows peer-to-peer connectivity, which could allow two gaming devices, for example, to connect directly to each other.

Why is Wi-Fi useful?

A Wi-Fi enabled computer, mobile phone, game console or MP3 player can connect to the internet when it's in the range of a wireless network, without being plugged in.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using Wi-Fi devices?

If you set up a wireless internet connection that is unsecured, other people can anonymously 'piggyback' onto your connection. This means they can illegally share music or movies, or even download pornography through your network, without you knowing. For home networks, experts suggest you ensure the Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA) encryption function is turned on.

Public Wi-Fi services can also be prone to hackers, meaning you should be careful not to send sensitive information or access sites such as online banks using public Wi-Fi hotspots.

As always, you should make sure your computer has all the latest security updates and virus protection software.

Want to know more about Wi-Fi?

www.telstra.com.au
www.acma.gov.au
www.wi-fi.org

Wikis

What is a wiki?

Wikis are an online group of documents/webpages that many different users can add to and edit freely online. The most famous wiki is Wikipedia.

How does it work?

Wikis work on the basis that whoever is in that particular wiki's community will edit and add to the information available.

What's great about wikis?

The community that works with the wiki maintains the integrity and volume of the information available.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are using wikis?

Remind your children not to assume information is correct – there is definitely room for errors and bias.

Want to know more about wikis?

Try the big one – Wikipedia
www.wikipedia.org

YouTube

What is it?

YouTube is a video clip sharing website.

How does it work?

Users can logon and add video clips, or simply look through the site and see the video clips available.

What's great about YouTube?

A lot of the film clips on YouTube are really fun to watch and entertaining. It's kind of like watching television on the internet.

What do you need to keep in mind if your children are hanging out on YouTube?

YouTube isn't age specific, so your child might be viewing clips that aren't appropriate. Also, any videos that they upload to YouTube can be seen by anyone.

Want to know more about YouTube?

Take a look for yourself!
www.youtube.com

YouTube : The website isn't age specific, so your child might be viewing clips that aren't appropriate

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