



Termly Computing Online Safety Newsletter

Online Safety Newsletter Autumn 2023

VR Technology

The use of VR technology is becoming both more affordable and as a result more widely available. This has itself led to an increase in users.

The platforms that utilize this groundbreaking technology, are in many respects an unknown to regulators and educators alike. Concepts such as multi-user spaces and phantom touch, in addition to the ability to access restricted portions of the internet, whilst being hooked up to one's physical body opens new avenues of concern.

The NSPCC has recently commissioned both a report and study into the vulnerability windows opened by VR technologies. To find out more please follow the link below:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2023/over-75-of-people-believe-children-are-at-significant-risk-of-sexual-abuse-when-using-vr-technology/>



Parental controls

With Christmas nearly here and perhaps with presents including new technology or related games being received, we thought we'd provide you with a little reminder of how to set up appropriate parental controls.

Games/consoles

First, check the PEGI rating of any new games to ensure that your child is old enough to be playing them. PEGI provides age classifications for games and **considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty**. It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration the chat facilities within games. If a game does allow your child to communicate with others then you can adjust the settings so they are appropriate to your child or disable it completely.

Secondly, for any consoles (new and old), it is important to set up appropriate controls such as restricting spending limits and again managing who they can communicate with. Follow the links below to find out how to set up parental controls for each device:



Xbox:

<https://www.xbox.com/enGB/community/foreveryone/responsible-gaming>

Playstation:

<https://www.playstation.com/engb/support/account/ps5-parentalcontrols->



Be kind online



It can be very easy online for children to behave in a way that they wouldn't if they were face to face with each other. Talk to your child about how they are speaking to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with respect and kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face. Dr Linda Papadopoulos (Internet Matters Ambassador) provides tips on how you

can help your child to be kind online in this YouTube video such as teaching them how to be inclusive and think about how they would like to be treated online themselves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q&t=9s>

Ensure that your child understands that if they receive unkind messages (or see something that worries them) then they should not reply or engage in conversation with them, but that they should tell a trusted adult. You can use the tools within an app to report any offensive or hurtful content as well as block people so they cannot contact you again in the future.

Unicef have a comprehensive area on their website, which talks about what Cyberbullying is and how to stop it:

<https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>

Childline also have a lot of information about Cyberbullying, including advice to those that might be bullying:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/typesbullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>



Produced in collaboration with Home Office PREVENT and the West Midlands Police Crime Commissioner, Safety Net is a unique educational resource and training programme designed to provide the tools and confidence to engage children and their parents, in a concerted effort to encourage safe online practice in the home.

As the Internet and social media act as the gateway to the adult world, children are increasingly accessing online platforms more and more from an early age. Though they are becoming smarter and growing up computer literate, they are innocent and do not possess the life skills needed to recognise potential dangers.

Safety Net embeds the understanding and effective protective behaviour strategies needed to help young people across all year groups stay safe, both online and in the physical world. Adopted by parents, schools, local authorities and multi-agency partnerships across the UK, it is establishing itself as a vital tool in safeguarding children.

<https://safetynet.skipseducational.org/>

Online Grooming

Internet Matters have produced a guide outlining what you need to know about Online Grooming:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/online-grooming-guide-what-parents-need-to-know/>

The logo for "internet matters.org". The word "internet" is in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The word "matters.org" is in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. The logo is set against a green rectangular background.

Online Safety with Google

As part of Google Families, Google have a hub of resources that you can use including conversation starters with links to additional tools and advice and information about parental controls. Google also provide you with resources to help your children build healthier habits and stay safe online. There is also a selection of ideas on how to use technology as a family in a fun and engaging manner such as exploring the world and learning how to code. You can access the hub here:

https://families.google/intl/en_uk/



Screentime advice

We're often asked how long children should spend on their devices each day. Childnet have created a blog discussing why it is difficult to specify a limit and what you should consider. You can read it here:

<https://www.childnet.com/blog/screentime-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>

