



Parents Online Safety Presentation September 2024

Slide 1 - Title

Slide 2 - What are children doing online?

Ask the parents to consider what their own playground would have looked like as a child and now compare it to our children's, which now includes a digital playground.

All of the apps/sites shown in this slide have their own threats to our children and while there are numerous benefits to most of these apps, children need to understand that any app or game that allows them to connect with other people, especially people they are unfamiliar with is potentially a threat.

Explain to parents that these threats are why we teach the children appropriate behaviours and skills for their online lives. If we can teach them how to behave safely online, the app or game they are using will not matter as they will know how to behave regardless of their online situation.

There are primarily four categories of what children are doing online. Using social media, watching or creating videos, doing homework or other schoolwork and playing online computer games. However, in the last five years, there has been a significant change in what children are doing online with more changes on the horizon. The increasing introduction of AI (artificial intelligence) online as well as having it embedded within the apps and websites children regularly visit provides a variety of new opportunities and advantages but brings its own risks.

Use the opportunity to discuss some of the lesser known apps shown on the slide or any that may not appear as there will no doubt be other apps and games that parents may have heard of and have concerns about. Ask the parents whether they could name all the logos from the slide or to explain the app to you?

Online gaming has and continues to increase in popularity and the number of children accessing online games has grown year on year. Around 60% of children ages 3-17 play some form of online video games. Boys are more likely to be playing online games.

The risks of online gaming are the same as in many other areas of children's online lives, however a child's attention when playing online games is often focused on the game, they are playing rather than protecting themselves. This may make children more vulnerable to people looking to harm or abuse them.

The majority of online games allow children to communicate with others, this can be via a headset or as a text chat feature within the game. Encourage parents to talk to their children about the importance of the content of these online conversations with others, which should never become personal (about their life).

Key Questions

- Are parents aware of the content of the games their children are playing?
- Are parents aware of the other people they may be playing with online?
- Are parents aware of the content of the conversations their children are having with online friends?
- Are parents aware of parental controls that are available for the games their children are playing?
- Do the children know what to do if they see/hear something inappropriate/upsetting?

Social Media continues to play a significant part in children's lives and particularly over the last few years during the various lockdowns. For all children, the main way they have continued to talk to their friends during the lockdowns is via technology. Girls are fractionally more likely to be using/posting to social media apps than boys, however children are more likely to be passive users of social media rather than active users.

The risks involved with social media usage not only includes communication from others but encountering images, videos, influencers and other media that is inappropriate for their age range. This may include various forms of violence (real or simulated), bad language, pornography or unrealistic body/beauty standards.

When it comes to social media, the importance of setting a good example and being a positive role model should not be underestimated.

Key Questions

- Are parents aware of which apps their children are using to communicate?
- Are parents aware of the content that appears on these apps and how it is presented to their children?
- Are parents aware of the safety features/parental controls of each of these social media apps?

Video sharing sites have also become increasingly popular over the last few years. By age 17 98% of children watch online videos (92% for 3-4 year olds). While YouTube is the most popular and well known, there are numerous other sites that children can watch or post video including TikTok and Twitch and sharing videos is now commonplace on almost all social media platforms.

Once again, the risks involved with video sharing sites include the content of videos that may be inappropriate for young children. However, for those children who may post or stream to a video sharing site, the risks of over sharing or unknowingly sharing personal information become very real.

A knowledge of these sites and what your children are doing on them is incredibly important.

Key Questions

- Which video sharing sites do your children use?
- Who is your children's favourite 'YouTuber' or influencer to watch and is their content appropriate?
- Does your child post their own videos to video sharing sites? Who views their content?
- Are there any parental/safety controls in place?

Artificial Intelligence use is also on the rise. AI technology is emerging as an aid for learning. 35% of 8-17-year-old users of AI said they used the technology to learn, and 37% reported using AI for school, with minimal differences by age.

Though most AI that would be used by children in this way is fairly safe, the issues facing children concerning AI is identifying AI content online that is touted as being genuine. AI generated fake news, AI generated social media profiles and images and AI powered scams is growing and more and more is being targeted towards younger users.

Key Questions

- Are your children aware of what AI is/have they used it before?
- Can your children spot an AI generated image from a real image?
- How can AI be used in positive/negative ways?

One of the key messages at this point to try to communicate is that if there are parents there who have younger children or children that have not accessed any of these sites/apps then to get parameters and controls in place in the first instance rather than trying to wrestle back control. For example, this could be via limiting time on a device.

Slide 3 - One Internet Minute

This slide shows the scale of modern day internet use. This information was gathered in December 2023 and shows just how much the internet has become a part of our daily lives. While some of the apps and sites mentioned are more from an American audience, the scale of our internet use cannot be denied.

More information at the link below.

<https://uk.pcmag.com/the-why-axis-serie/150116/heres-what-happens-in-60-seconds-of-global-internet-activity>

Slide 4 - Children's Tech Trends

Slides 4-9 - Media Use and Attitudes report 2024

The following slides show statistics taken from Ofcom's Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitude Reports 2024.

The full article can be found at the link below, but the next slides try to summarise some of the key points.

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/children/children-media-use-and-attitudes-2024/childrens-media-literacy-report-2024.pdf?v=368229>

Slide 5

In 2024, children have a greater access to the internet than ever before. With 84% of children from 3 and above having some sort of access to the internet and 96% (and above) of children from age 12 and above having their own mobile phone.

In many cases, this access can be used for a number of positive or seemingly inconsequential reasons such as schoolwork or simply streaming videos on YouTube. Children are able to learn, create and communicate more freely than ever before.

The downside of this is that certain online communities and the attitudes, negativity and often worrying or cruel comments can be found by young children much easier. It is these parts of the internet that children need to be aware of and have the tools and attitudes to do the right thing when confronted by them.

Slide 6

When talking to children about how they use technology, many children will talk about how they consume media from apps such as TikTok, Instagram or YouTube. This is often in place of being creative as demonstrated by the data shown in the two graphics on this slide.

Slide 7

More findings from Ofcom show how the consumption of media has grown to, in some cases, worrying amounts. Children in the UK spend over 2 hours a day on TikTok. This increased screen time will also have the effect of children increasing their chances of seeing inappropriate content.

Slide 8

With increased screen time comes increased online risks. When talking about online safety, we can often group online safety risks into at least one of four categories; content, contact, conduct and contract risks as explained on this slide. As children get older and the way they interact with the internet changes, the risks they face also change.

Slide 9

This slide takes more Ofcom data that demonstrates just how children of different ages interact with the Internet. As shown in the top image, the number of children who use a mobile phone against those who use a tablet makes a drastic change. While this change is understandable as

children get older, this also means children are given much more independence and freedom when accessing online spaces and in many cases are monitored much less.

The bottom image shows how as children get older, how they interact online changes. The number of children who post their own content or simply interact with other people's content grows as children grow.

Slide 10

The final two infographics in this section show how the content and contact risks our children face are presenting themselves. With increased access to online spaces, children (aged 8-17) are receiving more hurtful comments with girls receiving more than boys in all online spaces while up to 40% of children (aged 8-11) have seen upsetting content.

Keeping children safe online unfortunately cannot always be simply preventing them from accessing this content. Children need to also be taught what to do if and when the nasty side of the internet finds them, and which trusted adults they can turn to for help.

Slides 11 - 15 - What's in the news?

The next slides contain a selection of articles about online/technology based stories that have had various levels of news coverage so parents may have some knowledge of these topics. These slides can be simply used as time for extra discussion with parents or as a way for parents to voice any extra concerns about these or other online topics.

Slide 12 contains a story that may be upsetting for some. Please review this before sharing with parents.

Slide 12-13

The articles shown on this slide are a small selection of some recent BBC News stories related to social media influence and the influence it can have on young people. Though these articles are just a small selection, they show the power that social media and the influencers that use it to their advantage can have over young people.

Reports suggest that 9 out of 10 products now use some sort of influencer to promote their products and more and more of these products are being aimed at children and young people. The information on **slide 13** is a craze that many parents may have experienced with the launch of Prime energy drink, promoted by popular influencers KSI and Logan Paul.

According to Ofcom, girls are more likely to be influenced by social media advertising than boys, as they have more difficulty identifying why a celebrity or influencer would be posting about a particular product, many believing an advertisement social media post is simply because the celebrity likes the mentioned product rather than are being paid for it.

Slide 14-15

The articles on **slide 14** are once again a small selection of recent BBC News stories that deal with the increasing use of AI both in education and in the wider technological landscape. While AI brings a huge number of benefits when used effectively, there is also a sinister side of AI.

According to Ofcom data, children are twice as likely to have used AI than adults so preparing children and teaching them safe use is imperative. Ofcom also reported that many children have used AI 'just for fun' or 'to learn.'

There are safety issues that arise however when children are exposed to possible AI generated or fake news stories. According to Ofcom, only 24% of children check where the story has originated from and 35% of children believe that all or most information seen on social media is true.

Companies and influencers have used this to their advantages. Slide 15 includes information about AI influencers and some of the corresponding issues including scams and unrealistic views of body image.

Slides 16 - 24 - What can you do?

Ask the parents this question. What answers do they give? Highlight the positive answers. Explain that there is no correct answer to this question and that every parent and child is different, and it will be what works for their particular relationship and circumstances. Explain that you will make some suggestions for how they can help on the following slides.

Slides 17 - 18 - Acknowledge the Positives

As parents we need to acknowledge there is a positive side to our children's online lives, we need to make sure that we do not just focus on the negatives otherwise our children will not talk to us about concerns they have. At the point you allow your children to access online gaming, video sharing platforms or social media you need to talk to them about the benefits, as well as the risks. This conversation may start with by regularly asking what it is they like about the app or game they are using.

Slide 19 - Understand the world our children grow up in

Building on the previous slides, we need to develop empathy with our children and understand that our children grow up in a different world to the one most parents did. There is greater peer pressure for our children to have an online presence whether it is playing games, creating and sharing videos or commenting on social media. Parents need to understand this and listen to their children about their online experiences otherwise they will never understand the world their children are growing up in.

Slide 120 - Support your children

Take an interest - you may not have heard of some of the apps/ games your children are playing or using but talk to them and ask them to show you how to play the games or use the apps they are interested in. As a parent you will look for things differently to your child and you can deal with any concerns you may have with them.

Engage with them - regular communication about technology with your children will mean children are more likely to talk to you if they have an issue online, as they believe you are interested and able to help them.

Use technology with them - include them in your use of technology. Ask them for permission if you are sharing pictures of them, this will teach a positive habit. Take the lead and show them how YouTube works, show them how you write emails, post to your social media and make sure your profiles are positive, so they copy your lead.

Do not become a 'sharent' - we know that children copy adult behaviours so discuss with parents their responsibility as a role model when using their own social media and the amount of time their children see them accessing technology. Discuss with parents the need to teach good habits and it may be that if a parent wants to share an image, then they ask their child's permission, this teaches them a positive behaviour and they may ask others before sharing images.

Slide 21 - Be Knowledgeable

While it is impossible to stay up to date with every new app, game or social media trend that children may want to take part in, staying knowledgeable about the digital landscape their children inhabit can help parents to connect with their children about their interests and provide advice on how to stay safe online. The two websites on this slide are regularly updated with new information and articles to help parents stay up to date with online trends.

Slide 22 - Children will make mistakes....

We need to acknowledge, that within the huge landscape that is the internet, our children will make mistakes which can be used as learning opportunities. If children do make mistakes, they should feel they can talk to us (trusted adults) about them. The slide shows that our children are less likely to talk to their parents/carers than those in other countries as they are concerned about the response they would receive. We can avoid this by being upfront with our children and reassure them they will not be punished for the mistakes they make online if they talk to us about them.

Slide 23 - Test your home filtering

Many parents do not apply home filtering that is freely available to them with their home broadband. Encourage parents to run this test on their personal device to minimise the risk of children seeing inappropriate content.

Slide 24 - Parental Controls

Explain as a school that you provide parents with a guide for applying parental controls.

Slide 25 - Google Family Link

There are settings that allow parents to monitor and limit their children's use (this is the Google solution for Android devices). For more information, invite questions and signpost them to the parental controls guide we issue.

Slide 26 - iOS Parental Controls

As above but for Apple devices.

Slide 27 - Internet Matters

This website contains guides on parental controls for a huge selection of consoles, devices, apps and more that may be useful for parents to know about.

Slide 28 - Support for you

Signposting to some useful services.