School based Habits for Online Safety
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The key arguments

This article suggests that teachers should directly address online safety by teaching it explicitly as a unit or series of lessons. It also suggests that the definition of online safety needs to be broadened to account for consumer awareness, online behavior and personal responsibility. To move from the usual technically-driven reaction to Internet safety to a proactive school community approach, this article offers a framework for decision making about Internet safety that involves systemic decisions, school-based decisions and teachers' actions.

Why Connectivity is a Changing Issue?

It seems the world we are living in is changing constantly! It is difficult to comprehend the impact of such changes on our family, social and cultural structures. Fast instant communication seems to accelerate the pace of living and both add opportunities and pressures. Communication technologies in business, education and entertainment are being redefined and new strategies are shaping how we are informed and inform. Even so, parents and the community express fears that Internet communications might impact negatively on the social and moral well being of young people and society generally. While schools know that the digital medium for information and communications is vital; in order to protect, they impose restrictions that limit and sometimes stifle use.

Welcome to the 21st Century School

It is an assumption of the forward-looking school that contemporary learning requires that children access multiple viewpoints on a subject and connect with experts and other learners. Further, the forward-looking student and their families are demanding online access to school services. The traditional paper-based schooling is moving towards digital resources and services, while instructional design is moving online. Students expect access to school facilities from home, where learning moves to be web-based and suddenly, web protection feels like a 24/7 responsibility for schools. School administration rely more on the web to communicate with the community and classroom teachers are implementing new collaboration strategies in interactive environments broadening student access to learning experiences. ICT's as both strategy and pedagogy is almost entirely driven by Internet connectivity.

Parents' fears

For parents, there is a sense of a losing control when their children begin to communicate online. The language, genre, and tools of the online culture are often beyond the experience of parents and grandparents. They believe they can not closely supervise who children are communicating with and what is being communicated. They learn what they know from broadcast media, rather than online experience. Parents hear about the sexual

predators, access to pornography and extremist groups influencing the world through the broadcast channels of the Internet. As broadband enables a wider range of services, connections and information, these "dangers" frighten parents, who are struggling to keep their children safe in a changing world they do not fully understand.

There is no doubt that these dangers are real, increasingly complex and attached to enormous economic and business empires. We have learned that the development of Internet video exchange services is funded for and by the online sex industry. The significant and growing capacity to connect people is driven by dating and connections agencies. Online marketing is on the increase. This is a real world for young people and it changes faster than the community can comprehend. Parents simply want to be sure their children are not influenced by undesirable groups and individuals, not exposed to sexual material and are not tricked into dangerous consumer behaviors.

Parents trust that schools are safe places for students and so expect that schools protect children from Internet dangers and that school assist parents to educate young people about online dangers and how to handle complex situations. The challenge for the ICT leaders in QSITE is to meet both aspects of this expectation without overreaction, while responding to the demands to use Internet technologies for curriculum and pedagogical purposes.

Teachers' fears

For teachers, the Internet presents learners with a powerful tool likened to a two-edged sword, delivering both opportunity and distraction. For Internet-using teachers, new tools and an emerging online culture changes both how teachers interpret curriculum and how they teach. For others fears about plagiarism, classroom management in computer laboratories and distraction from the task at hand are lamented and given as reasons for avoiding online activity. Outside of the classroom students ignore their reluctant teachers and use online services anyway.

Although, what to do online beyond looking up information is an ongoing learning path for teachers, they are also cognizant of the community reaction to online dangers. Both experienced and inexperienced teachers know they need to actively address online safety. In contrast there has been little discussion in QSITE about whether to address this issue specifically and how. This article continues a discussion begun at the 2007 state conference. What was apparent at that conference was that schools must broaden understanding of Internet safety to include computer and internet addiction, as well as consumer awareness.

Habits for Internet safety

A proactive approach to online culture needs to include awareness of the dangers and strategies for safe productive online experiences. The following list of ideas includes traditional topics or online safety issues and some less well-known ideas. The age of the children will determine the depth of knowledge children should exhibit.

Students will know

- Pornography is socially unacceptable and must not be viewed online at school, home or in the community.
- Harmful people may be online and may try to contact young people without the permission of their parents.
- They are responsible for their Internet use and that their password protects their computer account and access.
- It is responsible and ethical to treat people kindly and respectfully online and to expect similar treatment from others.
- It is illegal to harass or bully people online or by phone and there are criminal charges and other consequences for breaking these laws.
- Computer addiction and Internet addiction can be avoided by balancing the activities in your life.
- Internet use is not free and someone is paying for online time and sometimes usage, so Internet use should be purposeful, even in leisure activities.
- General principles of Internet Service Agreements including costs, rights, responsibilities including those with service providers to homes, the use of Internet at school and agreements with employees in workplaces.
- That Internet use is traceable and monitored and that students are accountable for their online activity.
- Consumer issues, how credit and payment systems work and the legal implications of online purchasing.
- The dangers of harmful consumer and other schemes used online.
- The hidden conditions and purposes of competitions in digital formats including mobile phone SMS, email and web competitions.

Students will
- React proactively when encountering unexpected sites which appear to contain pornography, obeying school rules or adhering to parental controls, as well as discussing the discovery immediately with adults.
- Only communicate with people they know personally and who would be approved by their parents and teachers.
- Protect personal assets including personal information online by not sharing it with anybody including people they know.
- Respect the responsibility of their password and not share it with others.
- Demonstrate respect, manners and kindness when communicating online and by phone using any of the technologies' tools.
- Respect their parents and teachers demands that they engage in a range of activities off computers that includes physical exercise, meeting and playing with

friends and talking to family members without the computer, TV and other technologies distracting the quality of conversation.

- Take responsibility for Internet usage though a service agreement or school use agreement.
- Recognise the characteristics of common scams and how to ascertain if an email or other message is part of a scam.
- Respect that parents must purchase goods and services online for children.
- Read the "fine print" of competitions and avoid being the target of marketing campaigns when email addresses are provided to companies, groups and individuals.
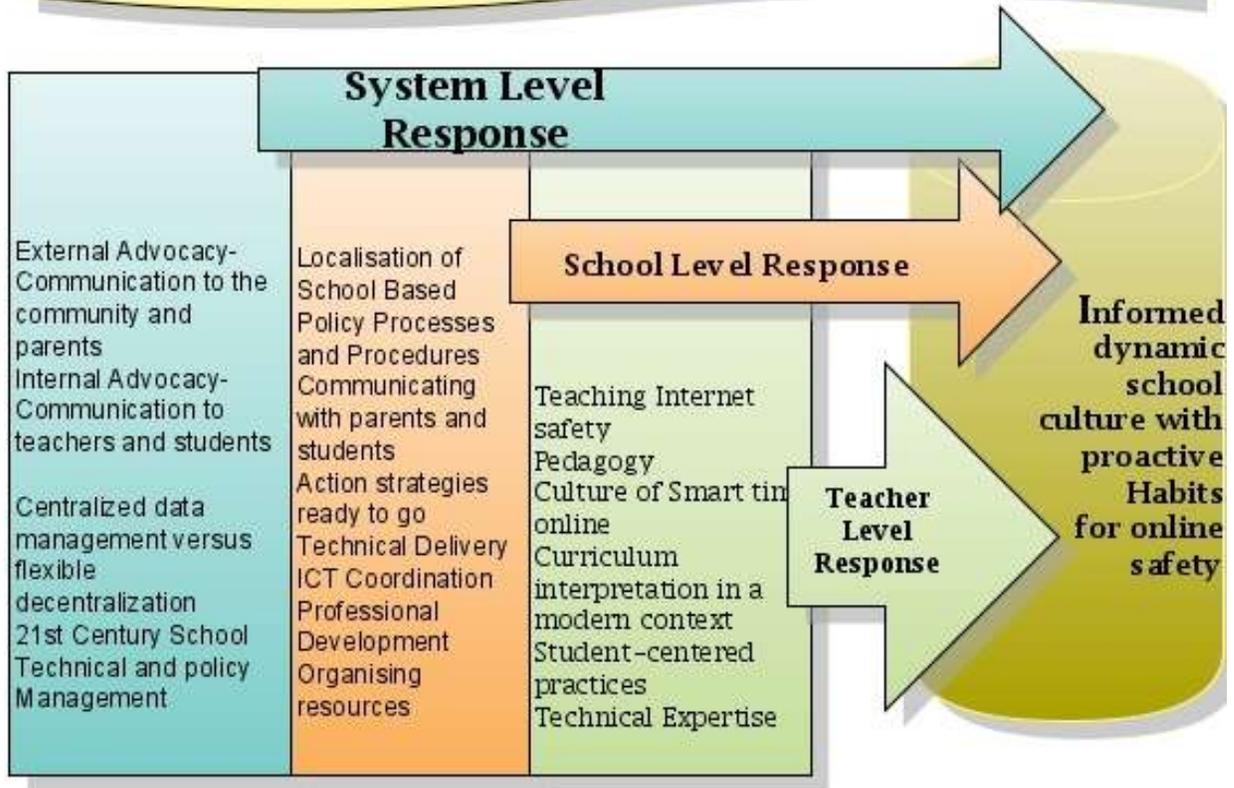
For schools, teaching about Internet safety is a proactive strategy to balance the usual approach of "banning and blocking". The processes and policies in many schools are implemented to assure parents schools are proactive in "protecting" the students from Internet dangers. The processes can also be part of the curriculum.

Introducing a Framework to promote Internet Safety

Initial responses to Internet safety developed by schools are often technically-driven reactions accompanied by harsh restrictive policy frameworks. Blocking web sites and services, filtering content and restrictions on activities are significant reactions for extremely dangerous sites and services, but over zealous protections often hamper educational creativity and restrict learning opportunities. Systemic responses scared by the possibility of a negative media report, adopt a "one size fits all" approach and frustrate the early adopters and pioneers who lament the lost opportunities and constant frustrations. Certainly the responsibility of Internet safety and the balance between proactive and reactive processes and policies is a shared one. Systems, schools and individual teachers all should contribute to a system of support for student use of the Internet.

The Internet safety issue is now harder and solutions need to span technical, policy, process and educational awareness approaches in a more complex manner. This article suggests that a tiered approach that recognizes three levels of responsibilities will assist schools to assure their communities they are taking responsibility for online safety proactively while not restricting educational opportunity. This article urges common sense and avoidance of technical lockouts.

A NEW FRAMEWORK – INTERNET SAFETY

System Level Response

External Advocacy-Communication to the community and parents
Internal Advocacy-Communication to teachers and students

Centralized data management versus flexible decentralization
21st Century School Technical and policy Management

Localisation of School Based Policy Processes and Procedures
Communicating with parents and students
Action strategies ready to go
Technical Delivery
ICT Coordination
Professional Development
Organising resources

School Level Response

Teaching Internet safety
Pedagogy
Culture of Smart tim online
Curriculum interpretation in a modern context
Student-centered practices
Technical Expertise

Teacher Level Response

Informed dynamic school culture with proactive Habits for online safety

This article suggests that QSITE members in each stakeholder group promote a proactive approach to Internet safety, that they share the common goal of developing productive and engaging use of the internet and that focus is specifically on the learning needs of students. The framework offers a schema for the decisions that need to be made and offers a set of proactive ideas for building a confident school community.

Teacher-level response
Teachers are the front line to student's time online and certainly more so than policy and technical solutions. Teachers who take responsibility for thinking about Internet safety and who have sound proactive pedagogy can assure parents students are safe by describing what they do in classrooms. Much of a school's response is grounded by what teachers do.

Teaching Internet safety
Adopt a deliberate focus on online safety, using the comprehensive definition suggested here, using resources suggested in the article and using a variety of engaging pedagogical approaches when assisting students to interact with Internet safety content. An effective approach is the presentation of a series of work units designed for middle school students that employs project-based learning. Middle

school students must understand personal responsibilities along with internet savvy behaviors when they begin to fully manage their emails and are literate in digital communications. Young children too can engage in Internet safety lessons and activities.

Pedagogy

Using a range of pedagogies to engage children in the task at hand and ensure activities online are worthwhile and deliberately planned. The productive pedagogies assist teachers to plan worthwhile activity, interpret curriculum meaningfully and execute a child-centered learning approach. Looking up topics ensures teachers struggle with keeping students engaged on task, compared to student interest with intriguing questions and interesting connections with people and online services.

Further, teachers can use their pedagogical approaches, teaching strategies and student collaboration and discipline techniques to ensure students to not stray from the task, have time available to wander into dangerous territory and have unsupervised time. Simple ideas like ensuring younger students work with a buddy online, and having a routine in place for when the expected unwelcome site or approach occurs are all within the teacher's power to prevent and manage. Technical limitations are not the only answer.

Culture of smart time online

Ensure that online time is purposeful time, within a sequence of structured activities. Free time online does not promote purposeful activity. Web quests and similar teacher tools provide focus and more certainty of student activity.

Library time and other less-supervised environments are important to address. Purposeful lunch clubs, use of student monitors and student tutors/help desks, and encouraging joint research activities will support library supervision routines.

Curriculum interpretation in a modern context

Connected teachers will understand online culture and be able to develop authentic and valuable online activities which portray the contemporary connectedness of business, society, and youth/family culture. Much teacher-developed online activity is considerably different to what students do online outside of schools. To be relevant, teachers need to understand online culture by being part of it and be online knowledge workers themselves. Only then will they interpret curriculum directions in contemporary ways.

Student-centered practice

Student ownership of their work, meaningful real audience, authentic learning rather than teacher-contrived learning and other principles of project-based learning and constructivism mean that students are less likely to be distracted by

aimless Internet browsing and deliberate misdemeanors. Further, what students choose to do as online knowledge workers will be more sophisticated, use a wide range of online tools than simple search engines and ensure students process their online discoveries at a higher cognitive level.

Technical expertise

There is no substitute for technical knowledge and teachers simply need to gain it to be Internet savvy. Teachers with technical expertise and specific online culture knowledge will be able to read URLs and recognize inappropriate sites more quickly, know how to avoid dangerous situations, be alert to mischievous students (when they are online) and know how students hide screens behind tabs etc. Teachers need to assure parents they have sufficient online experience and skill to keep children they are supervising safe and to design classroom situations including classroom and activity management techniques, which avoid awkward online situations.

School –level response

Localisation of school-based policy

Schools need a local policy and defined set of procedures about prevention of unsafe online practices based on sensible curriculum interpretation and encouragement of strong pedagogy, rather than a set of negatively framed rules or a restricting set of technical processes. This can be complemented by student and staff agreements, negotiated with staff and parents. Policy needs to clearly describe the consequences of deliberate breaches of policy, and recognition for teachers whose pedagogical approach prevents issues and whose curriculum interpretation teach students about online safety. Schools need a process to allow access to sites at a school-based level or request sites to be unblocked which seem to be safe and educationally valid. Blocking of processes and sites at school level needs to balance educational validity of the service over server load and other usual technical restraints.

Communicating with parents

Informed parents will have confidence of the schools intent to safeguard their children. Publishing of the Internet safety policy and processes on the school's web site plus listing ways parents can safeguard their children will assist parents to recognize the care implemented at school level. A "Simple English" page communicating "How we keep children safe online" will build community confidence. Providing parents with sites listings and educational indexes, relevant to current units, will assist parents to help their children and avoid long searching episodes at home.

Action strategies

The quality of a school's web site can greatly assist schools to undertake modern web-based activities including interactive web 2.0 activities safely and securely.

The tools available on the school's web site can enable teachers to establish safe chat events for students, provide access for students to talk to each other after school, post blogs to audiences which only have a school login and so on. Further, use of specialist education portal services like the Learning Place and EdNA provide safe and filtered services specially for education, and ensure a school can work with leading edge technology applications. The quality of tools and services on the school's Intranet can encourage teachers and students to establish class intranet sites, set up hotlists, web quests, blogs and other content management environments, so they have a defined learning space, rather than a search engine interface to the web. Proactive use of clever services provided by the school in conjunction with the school systems will enable strong pedagogy online and a safe learning environment for students. The culture the school supports as an online presence affects the attitude students, staff and parents have of the Internet as a medium for learning and communication. The investment schools make in a vibrant online culture is valuable and productive as it sets the tone for the users.

Technical delivery
The role of the ICT coordinator is crucial to balancing technical and alternative solutions. The informed ICT leader will seek network services and software which watches for large downloads, checks files types (eg excessive numbers of videos), monitors bad language and checks the domains of email sent to students. The vigilant ICT coordinator will check student activity of year levels to pick up unusual trends in Internet usage. Systemic groups with centralized services will often offer some monitoring programs for schools to use.

Professional development
Schools can develop a culture of internet expertise amongst teachers by using online learning as a staff development strategy. Collaborative learning online with teachers from within and other schools will assist teachers to use online tools well, and understand the dangers and opportunities of online culture and environments. Training in content management tools and intranet tools can complement real work online, as teachers develop online content for their classes. Further, teachers can share resources about Internet safety and collaboratively author units of work on Internet safety for various year levels. Teachers need deliberate technical training to recognize students hiding screens, using tabs on a browser, preventing popups, understanding the validity of sites through analysis of URLs, amongst other tips that help to develop Internet-savvy habits for teachers.

Organizing resources
Web links to Resources
http://www.netalert.com.au/
http://www.cyberquoll.com.au/hub.htm
http://www.nettysworld.com.au/
http://www.childsafe.net.au/
http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/extras/headstart/
http://www.cybersmartcurriculum.org/lesson_plans/

There are resources specifically designed to assist teachers to teach about Internet safety available from the Courier Mail Head Start series, Net Alert and Cyperquoll. These are free and provide great video clips, posters, teaching ideas and activities. They are accompanied by web sites. Further searches of education sites for units of work and teachers' resources on Internet Safety will provide additional resources. This article recommends that a project or task be developed that uses these resources and engages the students in deep thinking and problem solving, rather than strings of activities to deliver content. Resources placed on a well organized intranet will make them more accessible for teachers and promote the connected culture of the school.

System-level response

External advocacy

Systems can support schools by directly marketing positive messages about school efforts to provide safe environments. Using the media who are quick to judge when things go wrong, a positive informative message can be broadcast. Further web sites of educational systems can inform parents about systemic responses to Internet safety, share best practice stories about Internet safety and provide information on how parents can keep their children safe at home. Educational systems can also advocate Internet safety messages and strategies to schools and teachers, informing them of opportunities to directly address Internet safety, share great units and tasks and collate resources.

Policy

Systems can provide policy and policy resources to assist schools to provide safe online environments and encourage safe online practices. The tone of such messages will determine the culture of online educational activity in schools. Encouraging strong online and classroom pedagogy, modern curriculum interpretation and encouraging interactive experiences and online community will promote contemporary curriculum activity. Doom and gloom rules and blockages sends a message to teachers that interacting online is too much trouble. Systems can provide model policy documents and model agreements for staff and students and provide local intranet resources that enable teachers to build safe strong educational environments.

Decentralising control

Educational systems usually provide centrally managed filtering facilities and other blocking software. Although necessary and valued by schools and their communities, the implementation of such systems often errs on the overdone side and often a one-size fits all policy blocks the same access for students from 5-17, each with different educational needs. Enabling schools to edit (including deleting) from "filtered site" lists would enable local control and customized programs. Systems need to balance systemic responsibilities while ensuring educational valid activity can occur.

Practical ideas

Contemporary schools will increasingly use the Internet and improve the sophistication of what students do online. Providing safe online learning environments is a joint responsibility of systems, schools and teachers in collaboration with the parent community. Investment in the development of safe and proactive habits while using the online computer in an educational context, sits within a framework of decision making. Some practical ideas make the online safety framework achievable for schools.

Current positive responses	Proactive Responses needed
SYSTEM – Beware technically driven decision making often makes teaching difficult.	
- Individual internet accounts - Templates for consent forms with completion built into enrollment requirements - Varying filtering systems within a firewall - Provision of bandwidth to schools	- Improved ICT Policy design and implementation - Communication of a clear message about internet use aimed to inform parents and assist teachers. - Improved management system for accounts - Funding of technical support and ICT coordination roles
SCHOOL - Supporting a curriculum interpretation that reflects a modern context	
- Process for the removal of access privileges after transgressions - Strategy and instruction for dealing with inappropriate content - School wide filters of student access to internet sites - Internet Safety programs, eg Cyberquoll and Netalert	- Development of a specific ICT unit of work specifically about internet safety - Supporting the vital role of the ICT coordinator - Action learning model for professional development for unit planning, sharing pedagogical approaches to Internet safety.
CLASSROOM – Towards individual accountability and promotion of smart time online	
- Lessening number of early childhood groups using generic login and password for access to the computer network and internet - Teachers developing powerful communication processes when using Collaborative Online Projects (COPs). - Lessening use of undirected online free time as a reward for task completion - Concern about duty of care and supervision issues and student distractions on the internet.	- Individual user name and password culture must be allowed and fostered in all year levels. No generic login is useful. - Shift free time on computers to smart time on computers and powerful constructive online activities. - Promote student-driven work ethic and personal responsibility online - Explicit teaching about internet safety drawing from students own out of school experiences - Teachers modeling expertise online and use great teaching opportunities online