THE INTERNET: ENJOY, EMBRACE & EDUCATE

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Child Internet Safety

Empowering Parents, Protecting Children

Issue 2 | Spring 2015

ISP FILTERING DOES IT WORK?

DANGERS OF EXTREME CONTENT

WARNING SIGNS OF CYBER BULLYING

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Editor's letter

Welcome to ISSUE 2 of Child Internet Safety (CIS) magazine, the first independent title designed to help parents, teachers, carers, and anyone who works with, or looks after, young people to navigate the complex world of child safety online.

What we believe...

At CIS, we love the internet, the World Wide Web, social platforms, apps, and smartphones. We believe that digital technology offers young people a means to communicate and learn about the world that is powerful and unprecedented. We acknowledge it and celebrate it: this isn't a magazine that believes that the internet is a terrible place that's only full of monsters and criminals. The whole world is out there online: the good, *and* the bad.

Many children now know more about technology than their parents, teachers, and carers do, but rather less about the world outside their phone screens. And via their phones, young people risk seeing only what's on the surface, not what lies beneath.

Every child is now born into a social, digital world and we're all, collectively, still learning about the benefits and the dangers. Children are at the forefront of that, because their natural tendency to explore, communicate, and break down barriers is amplified online; any mistakes they make can have far-reaching consequences. That's why we here: to advise, to help, and to suggest practical solutions where problems do exist.

So what's in this feature-packed Issue 2 of CIS magazine? The allure of fame is irresistible to many youngsters, and social media seems to put it within their grasp. But what are the challenges of fame? And what happens to those people who find themselves in the public eye – sometimes without realising it, and even against their will? And what problems might arise when young people turn their cameras on the people around them, and, increasingly, on themselves? All this and more is explored in our eight-page spotlight report on Digital Fame, beginning on page 6.

Despite the continuing popularity of movies, music, and TV, one form of entertainment defines this young generation more than any other: video games. And countless adults grew up with them too and still love playing them! Yet many parents also believe that there's a direct link between video games and violence, social problems, and a lack of skills. But is any of that true? Our report on page 32 presents some surprising findings, including that moderate gaming can enhance children's skills, intelligence, health, and emotional well-being – even when they're playing the games that are associated with tabloid scare stories. But it's not all good news, as Gary Eastwood explains.

One woman who knows all about the news is US TV anchor Alexis Glick. Chris Middleton caught up with her in New York, and asked her what she's learned about children's internet use in America from running a sports-based, not-for-profit organisation, which interacts with kids via social media (page 38).

Last issue we explored two challenges to child internet safety, sexting and cyber-bullying, and this time we look deeper into both. First, with our report on the perils of extreme content online, including violent and explicit material (page 20), and second, with our guide to the warning signs of cyber-bullying, and what you can do about them (page 26).

But can you *teach* esafety to children? And if so, how? Education expert Richard Freeman explains all about it in our final piece this issue: an inspiring read.

Plus: a report on ISPs and child safety, and our all our regular features! CM

Special reports this issue on: online fame, extreme content, cyber-bullying, games, and teaching esafety!

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DIGITAL FAME SPECIAL REPORT

When Zayn Malik walked out of boy band One Direction in March, he revealed not only a million broken hearts but also how broken and dangerous social media can be for vulnerable young people – and for others who are dragged into fame's spotlight. Chris Middleton presents a special report on the perils of digital fame.

#Imagine there's no Zayn. **In March, Directioners – the young fans of boy band One Direction – awoke to the terrible news that heartthrob Zayn Malik had quit the group during its world tour; he said he wanted to live a more normal life for a 22-year-old, out of the spotlight. Presumably, he meant walking away from the hysteria that has followed 1D ever since their debut.**

Like their contemporary Justin Bieber, the boys have been growing up in the relentless gaze of social media – just as many young people are, in fact. That can be dangerous.

But only three days of "normal life" later, it was revealed that Zayn had signed a solo deal with Simon Cowell's Syco label and would be coordinating future releases with his label-mates 1D, suggesting either that the singer had had a rapid change of heart or that the whole thing was publicity coup (a 'Sycodrama', perhaps?) designed to launch the next phase of the five musicians' careers.

ONE DIRECTION IN HAPPIER DAYS

> "One video showed a girl sobbing into her pillow as her friend zoomed in on her face like a seasoned *paparazzo*; another revealed a girl collapsed on the floor, unable to move, howling in front of the TV news..."

In the unlikely event that it *was* just a stage-managed story to grab the world's attention, then its effects on vulnerable young fans were all too real, which may explain Malik's reportedly "glum" face in the days that followed as fans took to social media to mourn his loss. But if he genuinely wanted a normal life – and who could blame him if he did? – then he was finding out at first hand just how difficult that can be once your life is regarded as public property.

He's not alone. The concern of many parents, teachers and carers today is that more and more young people are using social media to turn their own lives – and other people's – into dramas for public consumption, letting people into aspects of their private worlds that in years to come they might wish they hadn't shared.

Perhaps in 2035, 1D's grown-up fans will be booking seats for a reunion tour with Zayn and taking their daughters with them to help them relive their childhoods. It worked for Take That, after all! But in March 2015, any genuine desire that Zayn had to escape teen hysteria didn't go according to plan. At least, not among 1D's social-media fanbase, which was responsible for propelling them to megastardom after they only finished third in 2010's X-Factor.

Harry Styles cried onstage with his bandmates on the night that Zayn quit, but 1D's hardcore fans were always going to react in a more OTT fashion – after all, their '*#Imagine*' fan fiction includes stories such as a dying girl receiving Zayn's heart in a transplant operation. Within minutes of the news breaking, thousands of devotees had logged on to Snapchat, Twitter, and other platforms to share their heartbreak.

While many were simply upset and wanted to pass on the news to fellow fans worldwide – a normal reaction for teens who've shared the band's five-year journey with them – others turned their cameras on themselves just so that they could cry in public, and be *seen* to cry in public. "Zayn's gone, he left us, why?" yelled one hysterical girl in a long to-camera blog, as if Zayn had actually died and was one of the dearly departed (rather than walking safely through the Arrivals lounge at Heathrow Airport).

Others recorded their friends' or siblings' heartbreak and posted it online: one such video showed a girl sobbing into her pillow as her friend zoomed in on her face like a seasoned *paparazzo*; another revealed a girl collapsed on the floor, unable to move, howling in front of the TV news.

CIS is able to describe these videos because we found them on online during a search for updates about the band; we weren't even looking for them. Not only were fan videos available in their original

BUZZ ALDRIN SELFIE

forms, but some had been edited into journalists' news reports, presumably without the families' consent. "There's a lot of Zayn pain out there," said one US music blogger, standing in the sunshine as he introduced a montage of video clips of girls crying in their own bedrooms.

Those of us who are still on Facebook are familiar with those viral campaigns that teachers create to show pupils how far a social media posting can spread online. The Zayn 'heartbreak' videos are a perfect, real-world example of this, because while youngsters' original intentions might have been to share their feelings with a circle of friends, once the videos are in the public domain anyone can watch them, share them – or write about them in CIS magazine.

It's a worrying thought, but children have been documenting their own, and other children's, misery to share with strangers online; that's the *reality*, even if they're not aware of it, and these videos represent an extreme – but voluntary – intrusion into their own homes, lives, and feelings. Clearly there are risks in that, and adults should encourage youngsters to consider what those risks might be before they share unguarded emotions (their own, or other people's) online.

Key questions for children might be: Are real tears and heartbreak appropriate for strangers to watch? Is it healthy to point a camera at yourself whenever you feel sad? And: *Are you living in the real world or starring in a drama?*

Psychologists would have a field day with that last question, but on social media the dividing lines between real life and entertainment are getting vaguer all the time. Just ask Bobbi Beale, a teenage girl in America who was the victim of an internet hate campaign when British TV viewers confused her with a fictional 12-year-old boy, Bobby Beale, Lucy Beale's killer in *EastEnders*.

Stories like this are one reason why some mental health professionals believe that social media can be a contributing factor in young people's mental or physical illnesses [*see feature, page 12*], or push at-risk youngsters over the edge into unhealthy or extreme behaviour.

The so-called 'Billboard Question' is another good one to pose: ask children whether they would want their private thoughts, feelings, or actions to be advertised on a public billboard where tens of thousands of passers-by might see them – New York's Times Square is a good 'mental image' to use, or Wembley stadium. If the answer's no, then it's simple: don't post that content on the internet, because the effect may be exactly the same!

Another good question to ask a child is: what content that you post today might your future self regret, and wish that you hadn't shared? That's a much tougher one for children to answer, but CIS suspects that in the years ahead some 1D fans might look back on their younger selves and cringe – and those videos will probably still be online, shared by someone, somewhere, sometime, without their knowledge or consent.

If you can't boast it, don't post it!

While it's easy to make light of kids' adoration for pop stars and pinups, most of us were no different at that age and it's obvious from the tidal wave of tears over Zayn that the heightened feelings that they experience at these times are real and genuinely upsetting to them.

Of course, youngsters have swooned over pop idols for decades. But while people might assume that screaming teens began with Elvis Presley in the 1950s, and were amplified four-fold when The Beatles arrived a decade later, in fact the phenomenon dates all the way back to silent-screen legend Rudolph Valentino in the 1920s, whose early death caused mass hysteria [*see box, page 10*].

But today's *online* hysteria has a darker side, beyond the day-to-day effects that it may have on people in the public eye – such as Zayn Malik – or on their fans...

Top Gear is one of the world's most successful TV shows, syndicated to the Western world and beyond. Producer Oisin Tymon spent a successful decade behind the cameras and had no plans >>

BADGE OF FAME: SARAH JANE

Sarah Jane Smith was the TV character loved by generations of youngsters in *Doctor Who*. Played by actress Elisabeth Sladen, intrepid journalist Sarah Jane first appeared in the 1970s and then made a much-loved return alongside the Tenth Doctor, David Tennant, in the 21st Century revival.

Such was her popularity with a new generation of viewers that the BBC commissioned *The Sarah Jane Adventures* as a standalone children's show in 2007, in which she and her young companions defended Earth from invading aliens. It ran for four complete series, but the fifth was never finished because Elisabeth tragically passed away in 2011. She'd been suffering from cancer.

Knowing that thousands of children would be bewildered and upset at the loss of their seemingly invincible heroine, the BBC took steps to soften the blow for younger viewers, creating special online forums where kids could safely leave farewell messages and say thanks to Sarah Jane – and to Elisabeth. A good example of bad news being handled well for vulnerable young fans.

"For many young people, the idea of being famous is irresistible – and social media gives them the tools to achieve it. But, increasingly, fame's 'golden ticket' seems to have a horrifying flip side, as many actors and musicians have found out... "

BADGE OF SHAME? NOT FOR MONICA LEWINSKY

One person who knows more than most about *unwanted* fame is Monica Lewinsky. She's the former intern whose 1998 affair with US President Bill Clinton led to her whole life being raked over in detail, by the public and by a Federal Grand Jury.

Today, Lewinsky advocates for a "safer and more compassionate social media environment". To help bring that about, she's set about "reclaiming her personal narrative" using the same public forum that helped rob her of her dignity: the internet. In March 2015, she gave a TED talk called *The Price of Shame*. In it, Lewinsky said, "Public shaming as a blood sport has to stop. I was 'Patient Zero' of losing a personal reputation on a global scale, almost instantaneously.

"In 1998, I lost my reputation and my dignity," she told her audience. "I lost almost everything. And I almost lost my life ... overnight, I went from being a completely private person to being a publicly humiliated one worldwide."

Lewinsky believes that the kind of online public shaming she endured has become constant and deadly via social media: indeed, it's practically normal for a great many people and it's damaging young lives. She said, "We need to return to a long-held value of compassion – compassion and empathy. Online, we've got a compassion deficit, an empathy crisis." *www.ted.com*

to be a celebrity, but in March 2015 he found himself thrust into the spotlight after being punched and abused by superstar presenter Jeremy Clarkson during the infamous 'fracas' that cost Clarkson his job.

Over one million people signed a petition backing Clarkson, a multimillionaire who arrived by helicopter before attacking a subordinate. Back-room boy Tymon – who Clarkson accepts did nothing wrong – received vicious social media abuse and even death threats to add to his swollen lip. Falsely rumoured Clarkson replacement Sue Perkins also received death threats, and left Twitter for a while as a result.

For many young people, the idea of being famous is irresistible, and social media gives them the tools to achieve it. But, increasingly, fame's 'golden ticket' seems to have a horrifying flip side – as many presenters, actors, and musicians find from the torrents of abuse that are directed at them on social media.

No matter how talented, skilled, successful, or attractive a performer might be, someone somewhere will use social media to tell the world how useless and ugly they are. Daniel Craig when it was announced he was the new James Bond, and Matt Smith when he joined *Doctor Who*, are just two actors who were called ugly and talentless by online hate campaigns – before winning millions of fans. But scroll down the comments thread on *any* celebrity news story, or beneath any YouTube video, and you'll see the personal abuse begin. The internet seems to be becoming a crueller place, in which a climate of constant, low-level aggression is accepted as normal.

But in the case of 1D's Zayn, even hardcore fans vented their rage at his "betrayal" of them *and* the band, trolling him and posting personal insults online. Worse, a hashtag *#cut4Zayn*, began trending on Twitter, in which youngsters began sharing pictures of themselves slashing their skin and self-harming, either in solidarity with the band or in protest at Zayn's decision to walk out. Suddenly the worlds of social media fame and infamy – always closely related – moved very close together indeed.

These developments persuaded charities to put out supportive statements and the Samaritans to prepare for a surge in calls. It was also reported that a firm of employment lawyers received "hundreds of enquiries" about whether Zayn quitting 1D was a reason to request compassionate leave from work. For the company concerned, this gave them free publicity in the national press – and in these cynical times, some might wonder if that had been the plan.

Most of us feel a particular affinity with someone in the public eye: a favourite singer, perhaps, or a personal hero whose work means something special to us. But for some people, that feeling of closeness can create the illusion that they know a star personally. For young people who are finding their way in a confusing world, social media can knock down the walls between fantasy and reality still further, by allowing fans into stars' thoughts and feelings, while offering glimpses of their homes and family lives on Instagram.

Younger stars have grown up with the internet, just like their fans. They often have big social media followings and share personal snapshots; for example, some of the young cast of *EastEnders* share photos of nights out with their mates. Images like these help to demystify celebrity, but they also mean that, for a star's followers, there's no distinction between that star's Twitter or Instagram feed and those of their followers' best friends.

Some young celebrities, such as Justin Bieber, go as far as sharing near-naked selfies in hotel bedrooms. On the one hand these images could be seen as tactless come-ons to young fans, whipping up more teen hysteria, but on the other, they might suggest that the star is lonely and confused himself. Who knows?

But there's a subtext to all of this: whereas fame used to be primarily about becoming known for a particular skill or talent, today it's increasingly about people turning lives – their own and other people's – into soap operas.

We should warn young people of the dangers of participating too much in these dramas. After all, they may just have been staged for the cameras. ❑

BADGE OF FAME: VALENTINO

In the glamorous 1920s, Italian-American actor Rudolph Valentino became one of the world's first pop icons and heartthrobs in the early days of Hollywood. His early death at just 31 caused mass hysteria and reported suicides, with his funeral drawing crowds of 100,000.

In the week after he died, an editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* lifted the veil on the actor's sadness at what it called the "whole grotesque futility of his life".

"Every time the multitudes yelled he felt himself blushing inside," said the report. "The thing, at the start, must have only bewildered him, but in those last days, unless I am a worse psychologist than even the professors of psychology, it was revolting him. Worse, it was making him afraid.

"Here was a young man who was living daily the dream of millions of other men. Here was one who was catnip to women. Here was one who had wealth and fame. And here was one who was very unhappy."

#FINDDANCINGMAN

The Dancing Man

One moment you're enjoying yourself on a night out, and the next you're humiliated in front of the whole world – but then, Hollywood beckons. Chris Middleton presents a cautionary tale...

Many adults catch themselves thinking, "Are they texting someone or videoing me?" when they find themselves near a teenager who's holding up a smartphone. Most of us chase the thought away and worry that we're becoming paranoid, but for one average man on a night out, it wasn't paranoia.

"*Spotted this specimen trying to dance the other week. He stopped when he saw us laughing.*" That was the tweet that 'fat shamed' Sean, a normal guy whose unselfconscious dancing at a party was videoed and posted online by a cruel teenager.

Andy Warhol said that in the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes. That seems to be coming true, although many of us are only famous to 15 people! But one side effect of today's 'social fame' is that some people are finding it through no fault or desire of their own: people who are dragged into the spotlight by other people's actions, mobile devices, and, sometimes, cruelty.

This *can* transform lives for the better – for a talented street performer, for example – but in the world of Photoshopped perfection that some youngsters mistake for 'normal', an average guy like Sean enjoying himself at a party is someone to ridicule.

Whereas guilt is your subconscious nagging at you and telling you that you've done something wrong, shame is something much more toxic: it's something that other people impose on us and make us feel about ourselves. In Sean's case, the poster wanted to make a fellow human being feel bad about not being a supermodel but still enjoying himself. Tragically, the poster succeeded – at least for a while. In the video Sean sees the camera, stops dancing, and looks down at the floor in shame. He understood all too clearly what was happening!

To compound his misery, the video was a social media hit. But it had an unexpected side-effect: the look of devastation on Sean's face when he realised that he was on camera was noticed thousands of miles away by US author and activist Cassandra Fairbanks. She wanted to put things right for an innocent man who'd been singled out for public humiliation. Her hashtag *#finddancingman* started trending immediately, and was picked up by dance music hitmakers Pharrell Williams (*pictured above*) and Moby, among others, who tweeted their support for him. They told him never to be ashamed of himself, or for dancing. Heart-warming stuff, indeed.

Eventually, Sean was tracked down in London – again via social media – and was overwhelmed by the public's support. The campaign raised tens of thousands of dollars with the intention of flying him to a private Hollywood dance party in his honour – the kind of lifestyle that his tormentors probably craved. The organisers pledged to donate the rest of the cash to anti-bullying charities.

Ironically, stories like this – and others, such as that of disabled man Alan Barnes who was mugged, but then had huge sums raised for him online – show the *upside* of our digital world as well as the downside. Yes, they reveal some people's unthinking cruelty, but also the amazing things that others will do to put things right. Yet there are probably thousands of similar tales out there that don't have a happy ending: victims of online cruelty who are waiting for dance parties and help that will never arrive. CIS supports those people; we exist to tell our readers about the dangers of cyber bullying – which is what Sean's story is really about – and other internet safety problems.

But cases like Sean's suggest something else too: a groundswell of opinion that *something is wrong* and that – in some cases, at least – social media is distorting people's views of the other human beings that they're sharing the world with.

Writer and documentary-maker Jon Ronson certainly thinks so: he's just published a book, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, which documents dozens of stories of lives that have been damaged by people being ridiculed and humiliated in public.

As adults, it's up to us to teach young people about respect, privacy, dignity, and the human rights that we're *all* entitled to. Social media can be a powerful tool to achieve those aims, so let's not abuse it! Let's use it to do good. It's there to bring people together, not to set us against each other. ❑

Are selfies making us ill?

More and more young people are pointing their cameras at themselves, rather than at the world around them. Should we be worried? Chris Middleton reports.

In 2014, it was reported that the American Psychological Association (APA) had classed excessive selfie-taking as a mental illness, 'selfitis'. The report was a clever spoof, but the fact that it was widely shared suggests that most people didn't stop to question it. It seemed *plausible*, particularly at a time when some in the US health sector (we don't refer to the APA, of course) seem to regard just about everything as some sort of disorder.

Yet a rash of genuine articles has recently drawn links between some people's constant documenting of themselves and mental illnesses such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder. That's a form of extreme anxiety in which people become obsessed with fixing aspects of their appearance – a condition that, if left untreated, can cause paranoia, reclusiveness, hypersensitivity to criticism, self-loathing, and even suicide.

It's been suggested that Michael Jackson's obsession with changing his appearance may have been a form of dysmorphia, triggered by having severe acne as a boy when he was constantly in the public eye, and touring with his older, more self-confident brothers.

Today, the implication is not that taking selfies is itself risky – over 90 per cent of teenagers do it – but that *constantly* turning the camera on oneself rather than on the world around us can be the beginning of an unhealthy self-obsession or a distorted view of our own appearance, which can lead to either over-confidence, or to no confidence at all.

All teenagers fret about how they look: they're becoming adults, their bodies are constantly changing, and they may spend hours in the bathroom dressing up, fixing their hair or makeup, worrying about their complexions, flexing their muscles, and wondering if they're attractive.

Often teens become anxious or over sensitive about their appearance – as a reported rise in plastic surgery among young people shows. Bring selfies into that environment and it's easy to see how the seeds of either vanity or self-hatred might begin. Adults should step in if they see any signs that children's 'inward focus' is becoming a problem – either through narcissism, or through hiding away and becoming oversensitive.

But *when* to step in can be a tough call, especially with teens. So it's important to tell young people that confidence and humour are attractive – whoever someone is and whatever they look like – and that over-confidence and arrogance are turn-offs, as are constantly apologising and hiding away.

For those young people who may already be at risk of mental illness (for whatever reason), and for all young people who are surrounded by social media images of perfect complexions, effortless wardrobes, and gym-toned physiques, selfies can create a kind of feedback loop for any feelings of unhappiness, or any lack of self-worth.

Medical experts have reported a rise in other conditions, including eating disorders such as anorexia. Online weight-loss diaries are becoming increasingly commonplace, and pro-anorexia ('pro-ana'), pro-bulimia, and so-called 'thinsperation' sites still exist (as do binge-eating and self-harming communities), despite ISPs' efforts to shut them down.

In 2013, the NHS reported an eight per cent rise in new cases of eating disorders. Young people remain the largest susceptible group, but the numbers of middle-aged patients actually doubled in that year.

CIS magazine always strives to be realistic about the issues and to avoid sensationalism, which is why we always set out the arguments and explore them. And we believe that the internet is a force for good, for learning, communication, play, democracy, new ideas, and much more besides. But it's clear that some aspects of the digital world are creating new sets of problems that we're just beginning to understand.

In today's climate of rising concern about such things, *The Times* newspaper has published a child mental health manifesto called 'Time to Mind', which sets out the key issues, and urges more funding and intervention. You can read all about it at: http://extras.thetimes.co.uk/public/timetomind/index.html.

Rock legend Peter Gabriel [*pictured, right*] – who's suffered from depression himself in the past and has spent time in therapy – is one of several high-profile celebrities to endorse the campaign. He describes the threat to young people's long-term mental health as a "time bomb", and warns that teenagers are becoming "isolated and alienated", and may lack the skills in future to become parents themselves. ❑

eSafety in the City

LEEDS

Every issue, this page looks at what one of the UK's major towns, cities, or regions offers in the way of children's safety, both online and in the physical world. This time, Gary Eastwood reports from one of Northern England's great cities: Leeds, in West Yorkshire.

Once known for its textiles and manufacturing, Leeds' old industrial skyline of mills and warehouses has been replaced by high-rise office blocks. But this is just one indication of Leeds' transformation into a digital powerhouse in recent decades: it was the first British city to offer full broadband and digital coverage during the dotcom boom.

Other signs of Leeds' new-found digital confidence are the blue, TARDIS-like telephone boxes located at strategic points around the city. As part of the Leodis [*the old name for Leeds*] Project, the iconic boxes, originally designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, have been reconditioned and fitted with solar power. The booths emit a unique, low-energy, high-bandwidth signal that provides free 50Mpbs wifi access to anyone in the vicinity – as well as housing the equipment for local service provider aql's metropolitan fibre network.

The boxes are usually locked, but via an external touchpad and camera they offer emergency calls and the ability to leave video blogs, sound bites, and photographs. These 'snippets' are being collated and stored by the city to provide a digital memoir of Leeds that's created by its citizens.

The many cafés and restaurants lining the city's squares and pavements also provide tailored wifi services. This strong digital presence on the street is one reason why Leeds' children are given statutory internet safety education, with children as young as seven receiving esafety lessons across the city. The Education Leeds Primary National Strategies team provides free guidance materials for the teaching of esafety to all schools through ICT4Leeds (formerly Leeds Learning Network).

ICT4Leeds is a partnership between Leeds City Council, education organisation 4Heads, and Children's Services, to meet the connectivity needs of Leeds' schools and local public services. Provided via Virgin Media's Public Services Network, ICT4Leeds offers Leeds' schools reliable, safe connectivity to the internet, esafety through secure filtered access via Smoothwall technology, plus antivirus, email, and VoIP services.

Safer Leeds, meanwhile, is a community partnership involving Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, and other organisations. It offers internet safety advice to young people, along with resources on antisocial behaviour, drugs, hate crimes, and other problems.

Safer Leeds also publishes a monthly document, called *#thebrief*, which "explains the complex and ever changing world of social media, smartphones, and apps to parents and professionals who don't necessarily know the difference between a hashtag and a status update". You can find it on the Safer Leeds website at: www.leeds.gov.uk/c/Pages/saferleeds/Internet-Safety.aspx

"The city council has an ambitious vision, called Child Friendly Leeds, to make Leeds the most child-friendly city in the UK."

The city council has an ambitious vision, called Child Friendly Leeds [www.leeds.gov.uk/c/Pages/childFriendlyCity/default.aspx], to make Leeds the UK's most child-friendly city in the UK by 2030. It aims to create an environment in which "children and young people are safe from harm, do well in learning, have the skills for life, choose healthy lifestyles, have fun growing up, and are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence". Social media is an integral part of that commitment.

The Leeds Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is an independently chaired, statutory body established under the Children Act 2004. It consists of senior representatives of the main agencies and organisations that are involved with safeguarding the welfare of children in the city. Its website [www.leedslscb.org.uk] offers young people independent advice on specific esafety topics, such as grooming, sexting, and cyber bullying, as well as links to trusted organisations and people that children can talk to about any online incidents they might have experienced.

Likewise, local internet safety charity, D:Side [www.dside.org.uk] visits schools throughout the city, giving pupils additional advice about how to avoid becoming a victim on the internet, how to shield their identities by using avatars, and how to report inappropriate behaviour. D:Side has also helped headteachers and teachers who have approached the charity for advice on dealing with problems such as cyber bullying and grooming. ❑

Byte-Sized News

Childnet Film Competition 2015

The Childnet Film Competition 2015, in association with PhoneBrain, is now open to budding seven- to 18-year-old filmmakers. Each year, Childnet invites all primary and secondary schools, and youth organisations across the UK, to enter its competition to create a short film about internet safety. The Primary Category is open to 7-11 year-olds pupils, while the Secondary Category is open to young filmmakers aged 11-18 years who, for the first time, have an additional chance of winning in the new PhoneBrain Category. Films should showcase positive and inspiring use of the internet, with judges looking for creative films that have a clear message and which match the theme most closely. Prizes include cameras and studio equipment, and a private award screening at the BFI. The deadline is 12th June 2015. For further information, visit: www.childnet.com/resources/film-competition/2015

UKCCIS site updated

The website of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has been significantly updated, and now contains a greater wealth of up-to-date, expert information and data. The UKCCIS is a group of more than 200 organisations drawn from government, industry, law, parenting groups, academia, and charities, working in partnership to help keep children safe online. The UKCCIS, of which Engage Media Solutions – publisher of CIS magazine – is an Associate Member, develops evidence-based best practice guidance relating to social networking, moderation, search, chat, and IM, translating it into direct advice for technology providers.

Digital Manifesto

The Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety (CHIS) has launched its 'Digital Manifesto' in the hope that the next Parliament will commit to implementing 65 child online safety recommendations, including: the establishment of a new body to ensure internet companies are transparent and accountable in supporting child internet safety; a requirement for every UK territorial police force to have a dedicated unit with officers that are trained to deal with online offences against children; and, that mobile handset manufacturers should consider designing new devices for children. www.chis.org.uk/2015/03/29/launch-of-digital-manifesto.

STOP PRESS: Twitter agreed to act on abusive Tweets and accounts in April.

eSafety live on tour

The UK Safer Internet Centre kicked off its latest tour of eSafety Live briefings in April, which will visit UK towns and cities until March 2016, bringing free online safety advice to both professionals working with children, and to young people. This year's programme is supported by the UK government's Equalities Office, the European Commission, and the four main ISPs – BT, Sky, Virgin, and TalkTalk. The briefings offer two-hour long sessions on esafety, including the latest trends, research into online behaviour, resources, sources of support, and legal and law enforcement updates. Check the website for details. www.esafetylive.com.

NSPCC battles porn

A recent NSPCC survey shockingly revealed that nearly one in 10 12-17 year-olds have been involved in making a sexually explicit video, in many cases because they felt it was expected of them. The survey, conducted by One Poll, interviewed 2,000 young people (of whom 700 were aged 12-13) about how often they watched porn and how it made them feel. Among 12-13 year olds, one in five thought that watching porn was normal behaviour, while nearly one in 10 were worried that they were addicted to porn.

Across all the 12-17 year-olds interviewed, around one in five said they had seen pornographic images that had shocked or upset them.

Many children stumble across porn while searching online for information about sex and relationships – which can be difficult subjects to discuss with parents and peers. As a result, the NSPCC has launched a new campaign offering advice about sex, relationships, and online porn, and to encourage debate about sex, love, respect, and consent. The website can be found at: www.childline.org.uk/Explore/OnlineSafety/Pages.

Anorexia action!

In April, France published a law forbidding the promotion of anorexia via so-called 'pro ana' and 'thinsperation' sites. Offenders now face prison sentences and fines.

COOL eBooks for children

The Something
REBECCA COBB, Macmillan (3+)

When a little boy's ball disappears down a hole in the garden, he can't stop thinking about what could be down there: a little mouse's house? The lair of a hungry troll? A dragon's den? Whatever it may be, he's determined to find out! Longlisted for the 2015 CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal, award-winning illustrator Rebecca Cobb's latest picture-based ebook creates an imaginary world that will have 3-5 year-olds entranced. (Cobb's widely acclaimed debut book, *Missing Mummy*, dealt sensitively with the subject of child bereavement.)

Available in Kobo format (Kobo apps and devices include desktops, eReaders, iOS devices, Android phones, Tablets, and Windows) at £4.31.

Smelly Louie
CATHERINE RAYNER, Macmillan (3+)

Winner of the 2015 Peters Book of the Year 'Picture Book' Award and Shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal 2015. Louie the dog has just had a bath and he is not happy about it!
He smells all wrong; clean! Determined to rediscover his 'Special Smell', Louie goes on a 'smelly hunt', meeting a fox, an old boot, interesting dustbins, and muddy puddles in an attempt to find the 'right' smell. Will he succeed in getting his old smell back?

Available as an iBook for £7.49.

The Adventures of Mr Toad
TOM MOORHOUSE, OUP (5+)

A modern retelling of Kenneth Grahame's classic *Wind in the Willows*, this new book from Tom Moorhouse shows all the signs of becoming a classic picture book in its own right. Great characters, lots of humour, adventure, and a heart-warming message all combine with stunning illustrations from David Roberts to create a perfect introduction for younger readers to Mole, Ratty, Badger, and Toad.

Available in EPub format (most e-readers and iOS, Android and Windows devices) for £8.62.

How Harry Riddles Mega-Massively Broke the School
SIMON MAYLE, HarperCollins (7+)

Part of the 'Shoutykid' Series, Harry Riddles, aka Shoutykid, is back for a new adventure. How can he solve all the problems of his family? Follow Harry's hilarious ups and downs as told through a series of laugh-out-loud letters, emails and texts to people such as President Obama and even the World of Zombies community forum. With new twins imminent, how can Harry get his sister a job far, far from home so that he doesn't have to give up his bedroom when the twins come? Children can also visit his website for hilarious blog entries, competitions and learning resources at www.shoutykid.co.uk.

Available as an iBook or in Kobo format, both £4.99.

The Fastest Boy in the World
ELZABETH LAIRD, Macmillan (7+)

Eleven-year-old Solomon loves to run! The great athletes of the Ethiopian national team are his heroes and he dreams that one day he will be a gold-medal-winning athlete just like them, in spite of his ragged shorts and bare feet. When his grandfather announces he's going to take Solomon to Addis Ababa, Solomon cannot believe his ears. He soon learns on their Ethiopian adventure that the old man is a war hero, who once risked his life to save a friend, and when his grandfather collapses, Solomon knows that getting help from the village is up to him. It's a 20-mile run from the city to home, and his grandfather's life hangs in the balance. Can the small bare-footed runner with the big heart do it? Shortlisted for the 2015 CILIP Carnegie Medal this is a beautifully told story packed with emotion and action.

Available in EPub format for £6.46 and in Kobo format for £6.47.

The Astounding Broccoli Boy
FRANK COTTRELL BOYCE
Macmillan (9+)

Frank Cottrell Boyce worked with director Danny Boyle to devise the opening ceremony for the London 2012 Olympic Games, and has also penned a recent episode of *Doctor Who*. His 2008 debut novel *Cosmic* was a huge success, and his long-awaited follow-up ebook novel does not disappear. Rory Rooney makes an unlikely superhero for the book; small and weak, and just a bit geeky, everything changes for Rory when he inexplicably turns a lurid shade of green. Stuck in a hospital isolation ward with two other green children – including his nemesis, school bully Grim Kommissky – Rory discovers that he now has superpowers!

Available as an iBook for £5.99 and in Kobo format for £6.47.

Tangled Secrets
ANNE-MARIE CONWAY, Usborne Publishing (9+)

Maddy can't find her voice. With her grief over Nan's death, her struggle for Mum's attention, and the mystery of the strange woman Dad keeps meeting, it's easier to keep everything locked up inside. But as terrible tangled secrets bring Maddie's whole world crashing down, it seems only bad boy Kieran Black can give her the confidence to speak up. Touching on subjects such as grief, friendship, and finding your voice, *Tangled Secrets* is a rare find; a beautiful and emotional story. Be warned though; keep your handkerchief close by!

Availabe in EPub format for £3.43 and in Kobo format for £3.59.

The Accidental Prime Minister
TOM McLAUGHLIN, OUP (9+)

In Election year for the UK, this timely ebook tells the story of ordinary 12 year-old Joe Perkins. After telling a local news reporter exactly what he would do if he were leader of the country, the video goes viral and Joe ends up as Prime Minister! Then the fun really starts: Hats for cats! Pet pigs for all! Banana-shaped buses! Swimming pools on trains! A hilarious story of one boy's meteoric rise to power... but what would *you* do in his position?

Available in Kobo format for £6.11.

Half Wild
SALLY GREEN, Penguin (13+)

Half Bad was one of the most talked about Young Adult books of 2014, pitching Nathan, a Half Code witch, and his Black Witch father and White Witch mother, against the monstrous ruling Council. Green's stunning new book, *Half Wild*, is the eagerly-anticipated sequel that throws Nathan back into the Half Bad parallel universe occupied by witches, where good and evil are constantly in flux. Most of all he needs to learn how to control his Gift – a strange new power that threatens to overwhelm him. www.halfbadworld.com.

Available as an iBook for £4.49 and in Kobo format for £5.99.

Going to extremes

Extreme content is becoming commonplace online, including videos from war zones. Children risk becoming desensitised to the things they see – or worse, becoming fascinated by them. What are the real issues? Chris Middleton reports.

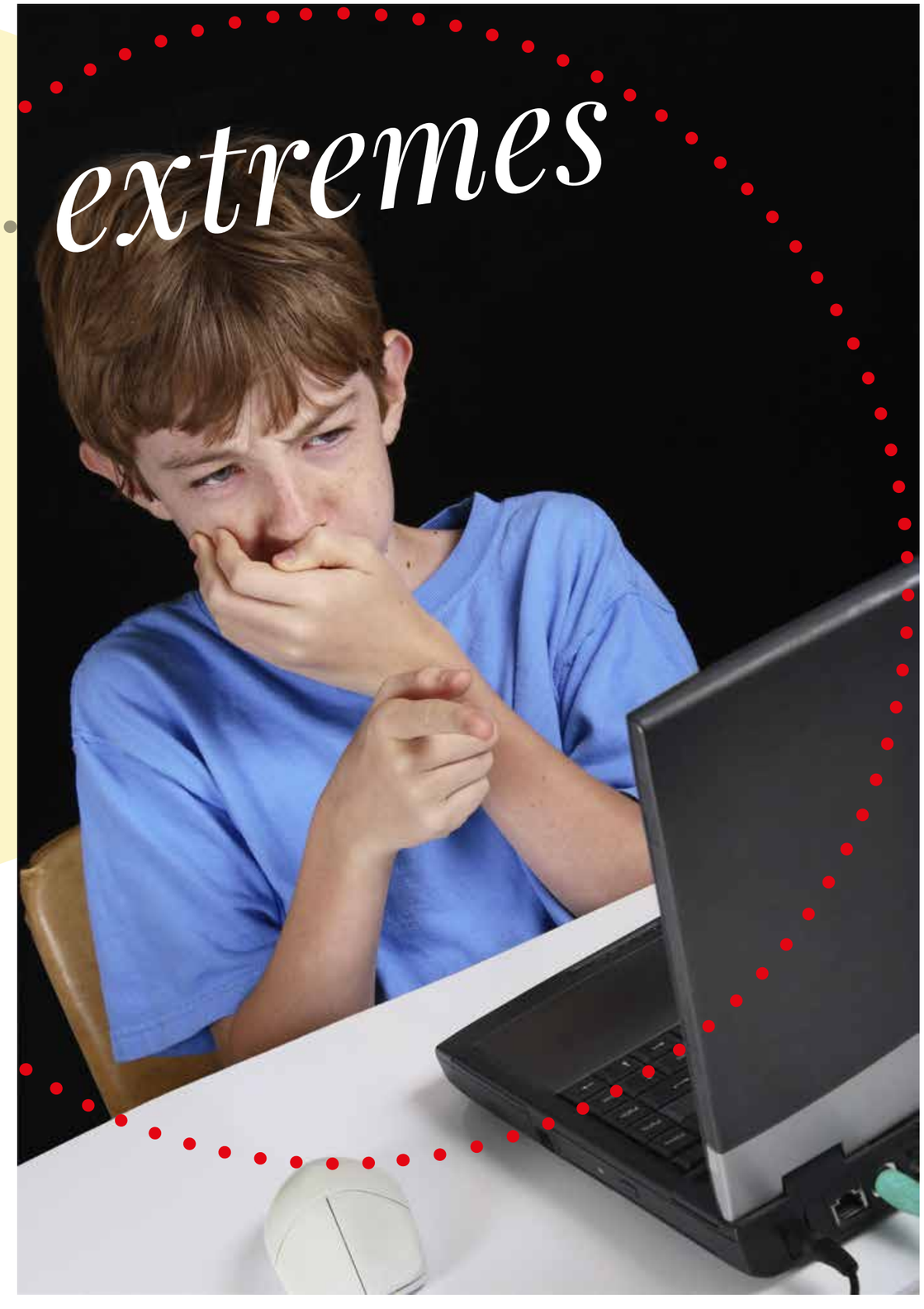
Young people might one day be fortunate enough to go backpacking and see the world at first hand, but if they're lucky they'll only learn about the darkest corners of the human psyche remotely, from their mobile devices. And as we all know, videos of horrors that were once unimaginable are now relatively commonplace, including footage of terrorist atrocities or mass brutality.

For kids who spend a lot of their lives staring into their phone screens, searching for new ideas and fresh experiences, there's a risk of becoming fascinated by the more extreme things they see, and desensitised to extreme ideas. And to be desensitised is to accept them as normal – something that the makers of extreme content understand all too well.

As adults we want to protect our children, but today's always-on, mobile, collaborative technologies have accelerated our progress into a realm that simply didn't exist before: 24-hour content-sharing. In that environment what's often missing is vital context, information and support; children may only see the sensationalist surface detail.

Another challenge faced by parents and teachers is that the privacy and safety that we crave for children are often rejected by kids themselves. They want to share everything, see everything, and do everything, regardless: it's the new normal. And that's great when the content has some positive value.

Spying on kids is counter-productive – especially with teens – so it's vital that children feel that they can talk to us, ask questions, and discuss anything that frightens or disturbs them. And if doors do get slammed in our faces, then we need to reopen them tactfully when we can, while allowing kids to grow up and be themselves – whoever that may be.



So if we can't protect youngsters from whatever content they might choose to make, look at, or share, then our best options are to offer them support, respect, communication, guidance, education, affirmation, and positive values: all that missing context, in fact!

Explicit material

The first challenge of 'extreme content' is recognising that one person's 'extreme' is another person's 'normal', and those boundaries are shifting all the time.

We expect teens to explore their sexuality, but the idea that many *younger* children now see the exchange of explicit self-pictures as 'normal' is a major worry. And as we explored last issue, making or sharing explicit content is a criminal offence for anyone under the age of 18, even if they're over 16 and in a consenting relationship [*see that issue's feature on Sexting for more*].

In 2014, a lot of these ideas were cleverly presented in a TV documentary. Teen actor Tyger Drew-Honey [*pictured, below*], familiar to millions from TV shows such as *Outnumbered*, fronted his own mini-series, *Tyger Takes On...*, which was a hit for the BBC on iPlayer. The first episode was an honest, hard-hitting, but engaging look at teenagers' relationship with porn – indeed, Tyger revealed that both of his parents once worked in the 'adult entertainment' industry. The programme revealed that many young people don't just look at porn (which is hardly front-page news), but regularly visit webcam sites in which they interact live with performers online.

The message couldn't be clearer: many teenagers today see making sex-workers do their bidding online as 'normal', without thinking about who those people are, why they're in that industry, and whether or not they might be being exploited or abused. In the show, most of the 'performers' are women, and most of the visitors are boys.

"Any content that children lack the experience, context, or maturity to deal with is 'extreme', because it is outside of their normal frame of reference. It's a new 'pin' on their mental world map. "

And that's not all. Via these sites, young people's own self-videos can find their way onto commercial porn sites that are accessed by adults: a serious danger that they need to be informed about. They may become unwitting porn stars themselves, creating material that's exploited by criminals. In short, children are unwittingly making child porn.

And while Tyger's programme showed that many teens are confident and have no hang-ups about sex, it was also clear about the damage that can be done to both users and performers. Obsessive use of porn, boys learning to see women as sex objects, and difficulty in forming healthy, emotionally mature, respectful relationships are just some of the long-term problems that were suggested by the programme.

With all of this fast becoming 'normal' (in the eyes of many teens, at least), a question nags at parents, carers, teachers, and anyone who works with vulnerable people: what might bored teenagers goad each other into doing next? What extremes might they go to, and what other levels of content might they seek out to entertain or shock each other? After all, daring and one-up-manship have always been normal parts of growing up.

TYGER DREW-HONEY

● We rely on news outlets to report issues responsibly, but journalism exists in a 'look at me' digital world too, in a quest for page views. Some papers cross a line away from the public interest towards salacious content that's 'interesting to the public': a different thing. Newspapers know that by reporting extreme content, they create a platform for it, but to not report it would be to ignore vital issues.

But the subtler point is that any content that children lack the experience, context, or maturity to deal with is 'extreme', because it's outside of their normal frame of reference. It's a new 'pin' on their mental map of the world – one that's in unexplored territory for them, and so the moral landscape around it is blank. At the risk of extending the metaphor too far, this is where young people often get lost: there are no signposts, nothing to tell them what's right or wrong. In isolation – as teenagers sometimes are – these situations are dangerous. Constant communication, support, and positive affirmation about human rights, respect, acceptable behaviour, and the normal boundaries of friendship are key. That's where we, as adults, step in.

Child criminals

Another recent documentary series, *Kid Criminals* on Channel 4, spoke to young people who are in the US prison system, for crimes ranging from assault to murder. The first episode looked at the challenge of reforming underage sex criminals – a difficult subject, by any standard. One inmate, an articulate boy in his early teens, talked on camera about how he'd found porn online at the age of just eight, thought that what he'd seen looked "cool", and (it was implied) then re-enacted it at home with an even younger relative.

The point was that the content he'd seen wasn't necessarily 'extreme' in pornographic terms; it was that he'd only been eight years old when he discovered it. He had no other reference points beyond the content itself: nothing to explain to him what was happening onscreen, nor what was right or wrong.

Of course, all of the stories featured in the Channel 4 series were themselves extreme (it's what Channel 4 does best), but nevertheless showed the risks of young people being left to their own devices – literally – and using their phones to explore the adult world in an contextual and/or educational vacuum.

So beyond images of abuse, rape, and sexual violence – which are shocking to *adults*, let alone to children – it's not about a sliding scale of what constitutes 'extreme' rather than 'normal' porn. The key issue for parents, teachers, and anyone else who works with young people is whether a young person is old enough to look at explicit material in the first place, and to understand anything about what they see. >>

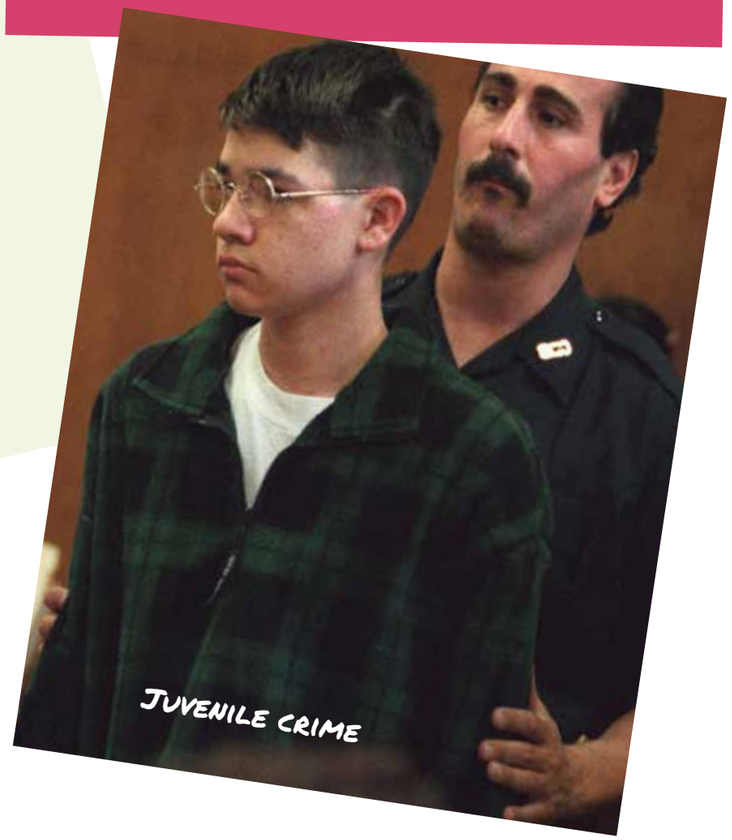
Extreme sports

In recent years, daredevils have free climbed to the tops of skyscrapers, base jumped into canyons, turned themselves into jet planes, and jumped to earth from the edge of space.

For children these people are heroes, because they're transforming what human beings are capable of and what others can aspire to. Even if videos of extreme 'fails' are just as popular!

But extreme examples of any human endeavour can be dangerous for those young people who might want to copy them – after all, the 'Darwin Awards' are a familiar concept.

"One inmate, a boy in his early teens, talked on camera about how he'd found porn online at the age of just eight, thought whatever he'd seen looked "cool", and then re-enacted it at home with a relative."



JUVENILE CRIME

Violent content

'Suicide on webcam' might seem like a concept from a horror film, but tragically it's already happened – several times. Worse, 'real gore' content of every type, including accidents, war footage, and human rights violations, is sometimes shared on extreme communities for others' titillation.

But while it's tempting to think that such behaviour is new or unique to the internet, it's actually existed for years: in scurrilous American magazines of the 1930s and 40s, for example, or in the carnival crowds that gathered to watch criminals being punished in previous centuries. Human nature has changed depressingly little.

Online self-harming communities exist among young people, as do sites urging them towards extreme weight loss and anorexia, plus blogs and groups for every conceivable type of fantasy, however dark it may be. Of course, most people would never think to look for or explore such places, but in our socially connected world, someone else might share them or distribute URLs for kicks, or to shock or 'dare' their friends. The fact is, young people will look at extreme content simply because it's there.

In many cases, what young people will find is the same extreme content that shocks us too from news reports: images of violence, war, terror, human rights abuses, and more, which can easily be found via any search engine. 'Family' internet filters won't always block it, particularly if the context of those images is a documentary, or an awareness campaign.

So one thing is clear: *context* is key, particularly if extreme content has been taken out of its *original* context, and presented in a new format in order to titillate or entertain.

Video-sharing sites have strict policies on any content that violates guidelines on decency, violence, or explicit material, but in reality these can be difficult to enforce. The billions of videos that are shared on YouTube worldwide mean that as soon as one is taken down, others take its place – often copies of the original, and sometimes in dozens of different languages. While most platforms do their best to police all of these uploads, their sheer volume means that they have little choice but to rely on people reporting videos or flagging them for investigation.

When we were children, images of atrocities or warfare might only have been glimpsed in a documentary, or in a handful of well-known photographs in history books. Such images offered powerful and sometimes valuable insights into the grim realities of the world in which we were growing up – award-winning pieces of photojournalism, or grainy newsreel footage that came to represent moments of history in the popular imagination. Without such pictures we would have had little evidence of what really happened in Vietnam or the Holocaust, for example.

It's also fair to say that the grainy, and often black-and-white media used to record and publish those images distanced us to a degree from the horrors they depicted. Today, those times seem far away indeed, as we wake up to a world in which high-res videos show acts of once-unimaginable brutality from all parts of the world, and not just from those regions or conflicts that dominate the news.

Even if we haven't seen any of these videos ourselves, we know of their existence from news reports. And for some young people, simply knowing that they exist might be reason enough to track them down and watch them, urged on by their peers.

We know, too, that despite the shocking nature of such footage (and conceivably because of it), some young people are attracted by it – as evidenced by the teenage boys and girls who've attempted to make their way into conflict zones to join various causes. So on some level, for whatever reason, we have to accept that a small minority of people have come to see images of extreme, brutal violence as normal, and even as representing acceptable or justifiable behaviour.

"Many social media campaigns use extreme material as evidence in a quest to make society better."

"Context is key, particularly if extreme content has been taken out of its original context and presented in a new format in order to titillate or entertain."

But it's never been conclusively proved that simply *seeing* violence is what *causes* violence, a debate that's been raging for as long as human society has existed. In the UK, violent crime is, generally, falling despite the graphic violence that surrounds us in digital media, including games [*see our Gaming feature on page 32 for more on this*]. More common causes of crime and extreme behaviour are poverty, poor education, neglect, deprivation, oppression, and lack of opportunity. Yet it's possible that extreme material can be a hairline trigger for behaviour problems that have already been caused by these and other factors.

Positive outcomes!

Organisations such as Amnesty International have been raising awareness of human rights abuses for decades, and sometimes share harrowing imagery with good cause: to inform, educate, and even shock people into taking action.

Another, Witness, was founded to put video cameras into the hands of oppressed people so that they can document and share evidence of their plight. Such campaigns have spread into social media, where extreme footage that's presented in a powerful, socially motivated context has real value. Campaigns have raised awareness of, for example, prisoners of conscience, animal cruelty, political oppression, war crimes, racist and homophobic attacks, cyber bullying, and police brutality. These are all positive campaigns that use extreme material as evidence in a quest to make society better.

Our conclusions...

A confident, mature, well-supported young person might look at extreme content and either be disgusted by it, click past it, block it, report it, dismiss it, do something positive with it, ask questions about it, discuss the issues it raises with an adult, or seek guidance.

But a child who lacks that kind of emotional maturity, stability, and support might become fascinated by 'the extreme', search for more of it, become obsessed, excited, or intrigued by it, or start an ongoing relationship with extreme content and with others who feel the same way.

They might not grow up to be bad people – unless the content they enjoy is clearly illegal – but the tipping point will come if they're tempted to start making and distributing illegal imagery themselves. That's where new cycles of criminal behaviour begin.

As adults, our role isn't to censor the internet or treat everyone like a potential criminal, but simply to offer a better moral context. ❑

As the most widely used social network in the world, Facebook's actions have an impact on over one billion users' lives. It recently updated its community standards.

Nudity, hate speech, self-harm, dangerous organisations, bullying and harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, criminal activity, physical violence, and other graphic content are among the areas covered by the updated guidelines.

Facebook's definition of 'hate speech', for example, covers content that directly attacks people based on their ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, or health.

But Facebook acknowledges that it's not only the content, but also the intent and context that are key considerations.

"Sometimes people share content containing someone else's hate speech for the purpose of raising awareness or educating others about that hate speech," it says.

"When this is the case, we expect people to clearly indicate their purpose, which helps us to better understand why they shared that content. We allow humour, satire, or social commentary related to these topics."

But global standards – even in satire – remain a contentious issue. For example, as we extend full equality to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in the UK, other countries – even in Europe – are taking new steps to criminalise those communities. Others claim religious beliefs as reasons to deny gay people services, as has been happening in parts of the US.

Facebook admits that forging any global policy on hate speech, or whatever might be perceived as hate speech, is "particularly challenging".

It says: "We know that our policies won't perfectly address every piece of content, especially where we have limited context, but we evaluate reported content seriously.

"We also remove content that expresses support for groups that are involved in violent, criminal or hateful behaviour … Supporting or praising leaders of those same organisations, or condoning their violent activities, is not allowed."

Nudity is another area where establishing global policies and contexts is tough, but Facebook allows images of breastfeeding mothers.

Warning signs

What are the signs that your child is being bullied – including the more unusual ones that you might not have thought of? And what can you do to help them? Chris Middleton reports.

Bullying is a scourge of the digital world. No longer confined to the street corner, the playground, or the school corridor, bullying lurks on the internet, on social platforms, and in mobile apps. Aggression on comments threads and message boards is increasingly seen as normal, and today around 80 per cent of all bullying includes a cyber element.

For any adults who experienced bullying when they were children, the idea that it can now escalate into an always-on, 24x7 problem, where malicious pictures, gossip, threats, and name-calling can be shared with the world, is just too awful to contemplate. And some of those activities can be conducted anonymously via proxy servers and IP cloaking services, leaving the bullies' young victims feeling persecuted, afraid, and mistrustful.

So what are the warning signs that a child might be being bullied at school, in the community, or online? Or that they're dealing with related problems that may be damaging their self-esteem and their relationships with others?

Insecurity, defensiveness, sensitivity, withdrawal, lack of confidence, secretive or obsessive behaviour, depression, or sudden changes in appearance... these are among possible signs that parents, teachers, and carers are told to look out for that a child may be a victim of bullying, either online or elsewhere.

But one of the challenges facing adults is that some of the things on that checklist of 'evidence' for bullying are the same as for other serious problems, including drug use and substance abuse. This can make misunderstanding young people, especially teenagers, even more likely than it already is! This is why we should always see the vaguer 'symptoms' on that list, such as insecurity, sensitivity, or lack of confidence, as opportunities to listen to children and to find ways to help make them feel stronger, more assertive, more confident, and self-reliant.

So taken individually, these emergent behaviours *may* indicate serious problems, but equally may be rooted in nothing more unusual than a normal adolescence, in worries about exams, or about acne – problems that can cause real and lasting damage a young person's self-esteem.

> "One of the challenges facing adults is that some of the things on the checklist of 'evidence' for bullying are the same as for other problems..."

For insecure young people, one of the dangers of the internet is that it creates an illusion that everyone else in the world is mega-talented, has perfect skin, a flawless wardrobe, and lives in a social whirl. That can make vulnerable young people – which is *most* young people – feel inadequate and left out of today's 'selfie culture'. (And as we explore in our feature on page 12, other aspects of selfie culture can also be damaging.)

Sudden changes in a teenager's appearance or behaviour may also indicate that they're asserting their individuality, or exploring their sexual identity, or feeling stressed from too much homework, or unhappy at home in some way and wrestling with the big questions in life. All teens will face these issues sooner or later in their own ways. The recent 'Rebecca Fowler goes goth' storyline in *EastEnders* explored several of these angles.

So the challenge for parents, teachers, and carers exists on many levels. However well-intentioned we may be, overreacting every time a child withdraws, looks sad, blows a fuse, slams a door, demands privacy, or shouts "You don't understand!" may drive a wedge between us and them and make serious problems much harder to spot, deal with, or solve. And do bear in mind that saying "pull yourself together!" never works with anxious or depressed people. They will tell you that they *are* pulling themselves together – 24 hours a day – and it's exhausting!

> "Victims may try to disguise physical injuries. This can sometimes be revealed in unusual web searches, such as for stage makeup, or for Bio-Oil, Amla Paste, or silicone gels and sheets."

Unusual signs

So taken singly, none of the more 'general' signs, such as insecurity or self-doubt, automatically suggests cyber bullying – although bullying *may* be the cause – but grouped together into a more obvious change in behaviour, they're more likely to indicate that something is wrong.

This is especially true if they're combined with problems eating or sleeping, or a sudden fear of school, skipping school, or any suspicion you might have that a child is faking illness. Falling grades may be another indicator that a child isn't coping for some reason.

Among younger children, new outbreaks of bedwetting and/or soiling clothes may also be a sign of potential problems, while some teenagers risk developing relationships with alcohol, drugs, or other substances in an attempt to cope with emotional distress.

Of course, the more obvious signs of bullying include potential evidence of physical violence against a child, such as unexplained cuts and bruises, says the NSPCC, which produces a guide to the signs, of bullying [*see boxes, overleaf*].

Allied to this is the complex issue of self-harm, where the psychology is often of victims wanting to 'own the damage' against them – to be responsible for it rather than have it forced on them by someone else. This 'ownership' of self-inflicted pain, such as cuts and slashes to the skin, gives many self-harmers a sense of power in the face of depression, abuse, and/or bullying: they *choose* to hurt.

But sometimes people self-harm in a moment of rage or frustration with themselves, and even because of peer pressure or social memes, as we explored in our cover story on Digital Fame. In any of these cases, having done it once they may do it again and create a pattern of self-destructive behaviour that can escalate.

Where there *are* physical injuries, victims may try to disguise them or cover them up. This can sometimes be revealed in unusual web searches, such as a young person looking online for stage makeup (which is much heavier than normal cosmetics), or for scar-removal treatments such as Bio-Oil, Amla Paste, or silicone gels and sheets. These are all items that teachers and care professionals are becoming increasingly aware of as potential keywords.

Wikis, videos, and other online guides to scar-removal are commonplace, and

> "Less obvious signifiers of bullying are belongings getting 'lost' or damaged, says the NSPCC, or a child suddenly asking for money in unusual circumstances, or even stealing money."

so a young person spending an unusual amount of time on these resources may indicate bullying, self-harm, or both.

Less obvious signifiers of bullying can revolve around money or possessions, says the NSPCC: belongings getting 'lost' or damaged, for example, or a child suddenly asking for cash in unusual circumstances, or even stealing money.

The victims

Bullying can have devastating effects that last into adulthood, according to the NSPCC, including a higher risk of mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety. But who are the victims?

The assumption is that the only people who are damaged by bullying are those on the receiving end of a fist or a malicious cyber campaign. But as the charity explains, that isn't the case: also affected are any children who witness bullying, and often the bullies themselves. "Children who witness bullying may show similar signs to children who are being bullied," says the NSPCC, "for example, they may become reluctant to go to school, be frightened or unable to act, and feel guilty about not doing anything to help."

The effects on children who bully others can be just as bad. These include an increased risk of substance abuse, academic problems, and violent or criminal behaviour later in life.

Violent bullies may have been attacked or abused themselves in the past, creating new cycles of damaging behaviour. Others may be unaware – to begin with, at least – that their behaviour online constitutes bullying, and in those cases parents should take steps to stop it at the earliest stages.

Breaking the 'bully cycle' is essential, not just for the victim, but for everyone else – including the aggressor! ❑

Signs of bullying

Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.

Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises.

Being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school.

Not doing as well at school.

Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to a bully).

Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn.

Problems with eating or sleeping (including nightmares).

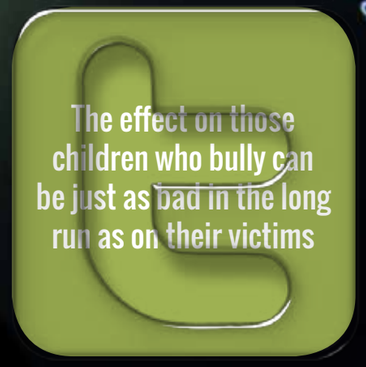
New cycles of bedwetting or clothes soiling.

Self harm.

Unusual web searches, such as for stage makeup or Bio-Oil, which can be used to hide scars or bruising.

Developing problems with drink or drugs.

Bullying others.



What if your child is the bully?

Take time to consider what to do.

Children may not realise that what they're doing *is* bullying. If they've been making unkind comments online, they might not understand how much that can hurt.

Calmly explain that what they're doing is unacceptable.

Ask them how they think the other child feels.

Explain what you will do next, such as telling your child's school, and what you expect your child to do.

Beat the bullies!

Here are the NSPCC's, and our own, tips for parents, teachers and carers of children who are victims of bullying and/or cyber bullying (which is a factor in most bullying today).

Talk about bullying and cyber bullying

Explain to your child what bullying is, and ask if they're being bullied. Keep calm and listen carefully. They may feel really worried, scared, embarrassed, or ashamed that they're being targeted.

Make sure they know who to ask for help

If a child is being bullied they might be scared to ask for help, because they think it'll make the bullying worse. (*Children don't like to rat on a classmate, even if they're being attacked by them – Ed*). Let them know that they can always talk to you, or to another trusted adult. If they don't want to talk to you, you could suggest they call ChildLine.

ChildLine: 0800 1111

ChildLine is the free, confidential helpline for children and young people, which today is available via phone, email or live chat. Use the number above or go to: www.childline.org.uk.

Help them take time out

If a child is being bullied they may feel down, worried, or lack confidence. Help them find things to do that make them feel good, such as listening to music or playing sport. Give them regular opportunities to help build their confidence.

Don't make it worse

Don't contribute to a child's lack of confidence by belittling their worries. Always take positive steps to reinforce young people's self-esteem whenever you can.

Teach them how to stay safe online

Cyber bullying can be really hard for a child to deal with because they can feel like there's no escape. But don't stop them from using the internet or their mobile phone. It probably won't help keep them safe and could stop them from telling you what's happening (*and it may cut off other sources of help, such as ChildLine – Ed*).

Parents: Talk to the school or club

If your child is being bullied, you can talk to their school. It doesn't matter whether the bullying is happening in school, outside, or on the internet. All schools have a responsibility to protect their pupils. If your child is being bullied at a club, talk to the person in charge.

Arrange to meet with their teacher or the club organiser. Take a notebook so you can jot down what's said at the meeting – it will help you remember the main points later. Tell them what effect the bullying is having on your child, and make it clear that you won't tolerate it. Ask for a copy of the school or club's anti-bullying policy and what action they will be taking.

After your meeting, arrange to speak to them again so you can see what progress has been made. If you aren't satisfied with the response, arrange to speak to the head teacher or club organiser.

Serving 200 million active users.

Are schools responsible for teaching children about e-safety?

Tony Anscombe, Online Safety Evangelist at AVG Technologies looks at where responsibility lies for teaching children how to use the Internet safely.

Over the past few years, technology has evolved at such a rate that it's challenging for any curriculum involving technology to keep pace. Technology advancement is in no way a bad thing. The Internet has revolutionised classrooms: accessing information from around the globe has become instantaneous and hassle-free and some subjects have been bought to life through interactive media. For children today, who have grown up with laptops and smart phones, a time before modern technology seems prehistoric.

Try as we might, parents and teachers aren't always on top of the latest developments or apps our children use in this ever-expanding tech world. So as technology continues to advance, the information gap between adults and children continues to widen.

But who is tasked with the important job of teaching today's tech savvy children how to be safe online? Whether they are accessing the Internet at home, at school or with their friends?

In order to get some answers to these questions, AVG Technologies conducted research with almost 1,800 teachers worldwide and a focus group of 210 teachers in the UK, to assess how they see their role in e-safety education.

What did we find? A considerable miscommunication over whether parents or teachers are responsible for ensuring that children are getting the most out of the Internet, without having to face its more sinister side. Of the UK teachers surveyed:

- A worrying 86% expressed concern over how much parents rely on them (and the school) to teach their children about e-safety
- Nearly half (49%) admitted that by the age of 13 years old, students will know more about technology than they do

Although alarming, the findings are not altogether surprising, given that nearly two thirds (63%) of the teachers interviewed had not received any formal training on how to teach e-safety. As such, when approached by students for advice on various online safety issues, a considerable 28% felt they were 'insufficiently equipped' or 'not equipped at all' to handle the issue.

Pressure Points

With such a vast pool of instantly accessible information, there is no doubt that the Internet is a great place for children to learn (and play), but without the correct training in schools teachers are placed in a difficult position when approached by students for advice on e-safety issues.

With 26% of teachers having been approached for advice relating to cyberbullying and 16% for advice on inappropriate content online, teachers are frequently being placed in a situation for which they have inadequate training.

No Monitoring, No Limits

Unfortunately, the level of reliance on teachers does not end there! Nearly one in five of the teachers surveyed (18%) said that parents had also approached them for guidance on how to manage their child's e-safety. Of that figure, 55% of parents wanted to know how best to limit the amount of time their child spends online and a huge 45% asked teachers how they could find out what websites their child is visiting.

The fear, of course, is that if parents don't know what their children are doing online (and look to teachers for advice) - and teachers are not trained to teach e-safety in the classroom – then online behaviour is essentially being dictated by the children themselves, elevating the risk of them accessing inappropriate content, cyberbullying or a more sinister issue.

Taking Responsibility

Given that a third (33%) of teachers expressed concern that parents of their students do not know enough about IT and e-safety, it seems that it's not just teachers that need to be educated. But so far efforts made by schools to educate parents about e-safety have fallen on deaf ears in the UK.

Of the third of UK teachers (33%) that said their school had arranged events to educate parents about e-safety, 40% said they were very unsatisfied or somewhat unsatisfied with the parent turn-out for the session. While it's clear that UK schools are heading in the right direction when it comes to bridging the information gap, these attempts only matter if parents are willing to try, too.

We're all in this together

So where do we go from here? It looks like the best way to protect children online is to install a culture of e-safety education at every touch point – from the parents at home all the way through to the teachers in the classroom:

- Parents need to start monitoring their child's Internet habits

  While parents should not be encouraged to 'snoop' on their child's online activity, showing an active interest in what children are doing online is an important part of development. It's important to start this discussion from an early age and if you/your students' parents are unsure how to go about it direct them to Magda & Mo – our interactive online safety e-book that walks children through different scenarios they could be confronted with online. Don't forget that simply communicating with a child and asking the right questions about their Internet use can be enough to spot the signs of trouble.

- Teachers need to receive the proper training

  As many children's first port of call when they have concerns about the online world, teachers should be given all the necessary resources to tackle the online issues they are facing. If your school does not have these readily available why not take a look at some of the free education resources online? Childnet (www.childnet.com), The Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk) and my own book – 'One Parent to Another' – are good places to start, and continue your own online education.

Harnessed properly, the Internet can be a wonderful educational tool, from which students will benefit immensely - so long as we all play our part in the education process online. The challenge is to remove any discrepancy between what parents think teachers should be doing and what teachers feel they can actually achieve in the classroom.

Playing safe!

A growing body of evidence suggests that video games can boost children's memory, improve their cognitive functions, and make them happier. So is it time to take a more balanced view on gaming? Gary Eastwood investigates.

Since iconic video games, such as *Asteroids*, *Pong* and *Space Invaders*, first entered our living rooms, hearts, and minds back in the 1970s, we have fully embraced the surreal, exotic, and sometimes violent digital worlds that they allow us to escape into.

As a result, the global video games industry – including console, computer, tablet, and smartphone games – has grown bigger than the global film and music industries combined. Driven by the ubiquity of wifi and mobile devices, we can now play whenever and wherever the urge takes us.

Yet even if they play them themselves, many parents are concerned about the amount of time that children spend on games – whether it's *Minecraft* or more adult-themed titles, such as the *Grand Theft Auto* or *Call of Duty series.* Increased violence, social isolation, obesity, and poor mental development are just some of the common accusations that have been levelled at excessive playing. But is any of that true?

Games have certainly defined a generation – and as we will see, that young generation has a very different mindset about gaming to many adults. According to the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), the representative body of the European video games industry, 70 per cent of 6-10 year-olds, and 75 per cent of 11-14 year olds in the UK play video games.

At the more extreme end of the spectrum, clinical physiologist Dr Tanya Byron reported in her 2008 *Byron Review* that "seven per cent of teens in the UK play more than 30 hours of computer games a week". That's nearly as many hours as children spend in school – and it's worth noting that Byron's research predates the recent explosion of smartphone and tablet usage.

A new perspective

But it's fair to say that, until recently, the vast majority of research has focused only on the negative aspects of gaming, such as its potential to encourage violence, addiction, and social withdrawal. However, there is a groundswell of expert opinion that presents a more balanced and intriguing perspective.

Indeed, there's a growing body of evidence to suggest that regular, moderate game playing can have *positive* effects on children, from boosting cognitive skills to enhancing mood, and even improving social well-being, collaboration, and physical fitness.

This change in opinion was highlighted in 2013, when more than 200 global psychologists and researchers wrote an open letter to the American Psychological Association (APA), demanding that it review its stance on the behavioural impacts of violent video games and media.

The APA's existing policy was drawn up in 2005, and was based on scientific literature at the time that drew links between violent video games and real-life violence. However, the 200 scientists believe that the APA's policy ignores more recent, positive research findings about the effects of gaming.

The group wrote: "During the video game epoch, youth violence in the United States and elsewhere has plummeted to 40-year lows, not risen as would have been expected if the 2005 APA resolution were accurate. This decline in societal violence is in conflict with claims that violent video games and interactive media are important public health concerns. The statistical data are simply not bearing out this concern and should not be ignored."

Many experts now believe that video games – of all genres, when played in moderation – offer a range of benefits. These include (but are not limited to) enhancing mood, promoting social well-being, and improving vital cognitive skills, such as hand-eye coordination, logical thinking, spatial awareness, creativity, teamwork, and a host of other transferrable skills.

Many games are based around complex puzzle-solving, in which the player is unable reach the next level until the solution is in place. Others promote exercise or boost physical fitness – thanks in part to the Wii and other consoles and peripherals that link onscreen action with real activities. Indeed, physical fitness is one of the 'killer apps' (to use an inappropriate phase!) of the new wearables market.

So, contrary to popular belief that video gaming is lazy and intellectually sedating, moderate usage can actually have the reverse effect. Some of that evidence comes from a recent study at Oxford University, which shows that children who spend less than an hour a day engaged in video games are more "satisfied with their lives" and show the highest levels of "positive social interactions", compared to children who never play video games.

The scientific paper, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, carried out research among 5,000 young people in Britain aged 10-15 years old. Participants were asked to say how long each day they spent playing video games, and were then asked a variety of questions – including on satisfaction with their lives, levels of hyperactivity, and how well they got on with their peers – to determine their levels of psychological and social adjustment.

The children who spent less than an hour playing games every day were better socially adjusted than their >>

non-playing peers and reported fewer emotional issues and lower levels of hyperactivity.

Importantly, the same study found that those children who used consoles for more than three hours a day reported lower satisfaction with their lives overall, and were the least well socially adjusted – compared to both those who played for an hour a day and those who did not play at all. Like most things in life, it seems that moderation is key.

A similar study from the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore goes further, claiming to be the first study to show that different skills can be improved by playing different video games. The research, published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, 'trained' non-gamers to play five different games on their smartphones for one hour a day, five days a week, for a month. Each participant was assigned one game. Some played a puzzle-based game, such as *Bejeweled*, others played virtual life simulation games, such as *The Sims*, while others played action games.

After a month of 'training', the researchers found that the gamers had improved different skills, according to the game they had played during the training period. For example, action gamers improved their ability to track multiple moving objects, while players of memory and puzzle-based games improved their performance in visual search-based tasks.

According to the researchers, playing different games improved different skills both in the game and in the real world, suggesting that playing video games could be like 'building muscles' in the brain through repetitive actions.

It doesn't require a huge leap of faith to consider that knowledge-based games, such as *Age of Empires*, might spark children's interest in world history, geography and cultures, or encourage them to seek out further information on the internet, or in books.

Likewise, global game phenomenon *Minecraft* allows players to use Lego-like digital elements to construct their own unique virtual structures and mechanisms, and then share their creations with other online gamers in immense virtual worlds. The game combines elements of architecture, physics, electronics, and geology, as well as having a social purpose.

It's notable that the positive benefits now being ascribed to gaming are not restricted to logic, puzzle, or knowledge-based games. Shooter video games might also offer strong 'learning' benefits to regular gamers, according to some research. For example, scientists at Northwestern University in the US concluded that 'shooters' are more effective at improving cognitive spatial skills – thinking about objects in three dimensions – than high school or university courses specifically aimed at improving the same skills.

Above average spatial skills have been linked with achievement in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and it appears that shooter games might be more effective in a shorter period of time – and with a longer-lasting effect – than formal training in improving those skills. (Interestingly, that type of spatial thinking is not enhanced by playing puzzles or role-playing games, according to the research.)

Meanwhile, playing strategic games, such as *World of Warcraft* or *Final Fantasy*, has been linked to improving problem-solving skills in children. A study from Brock University in Canada, for example, showed that the more adolescents reported playing strategic video games, the more they reported better problem-solving skills which, in turn, predicted better academic grades.

Also of note is the fact that enhanced creativity has been reported from playing *any* kind of video game, including violent games. For example, one study found that among a sample of almost 500 12-year-old students, video game playing was positively associated with creativity. This effect was not reported by children who used other forms of technology, such as a computer or mobile phone (for non-game activities).

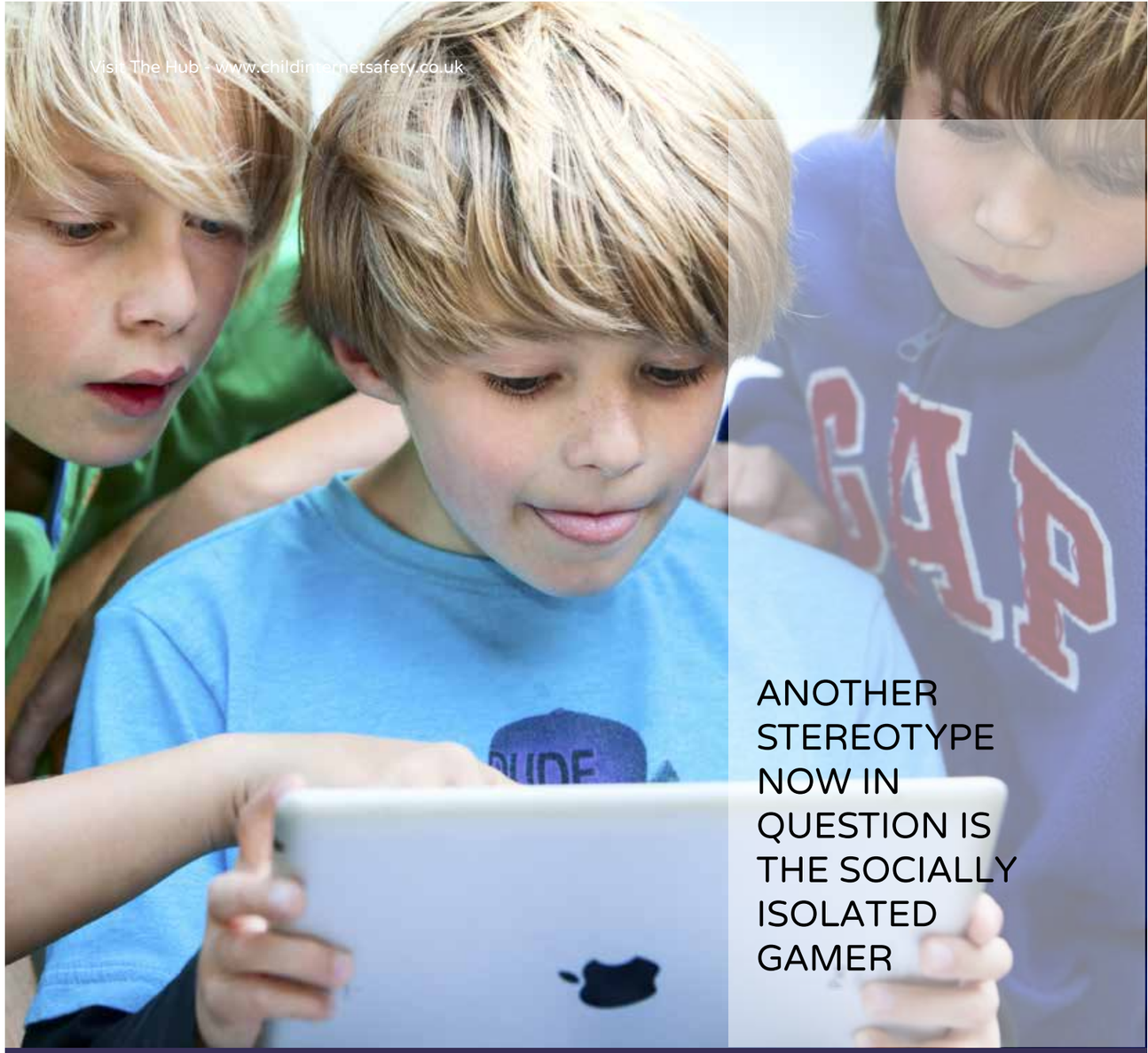
Old stereotypes

Game-playing could also make our children happier, according to some researchers. Several studies have shown a causal relation between playing preferred video games and improved mood or increases in positive emotion. One in particular found that playing a favourite game that is simple, easy to access, and can be played quickly, such as *Angry Birds*, can improve players' moods, promote relaxation and ward off anxiety.

Another 'gamer' stereotype that research has challenged is the socially isolated player. In 2012, researchers at Iowa State University found that 'prosocial games' – titles that encouraged players to cooperate and help each other, such as *Minecraft* and *Terraria* – could increase helpful behaviour outside of the game.

In contrast to their parents, most children view video games as a social activity, and not as an isolating one – in line with the general trend online, which is towards social collaboration. More than 70 per cent of gamers play with a friend, and millions of people worldwide participate in massive virtual worlds through video games.

Some studies show that video games might even help to create a common language for young people, particularly boys, which helps them to make friends. Multiplayer games may even create a 'learning ground' for acquiring social skills in real life, as virtual social communities require decisions to be made quickly about whom to trust or reject, and about cooperation and leadership. >>



Advice for parents

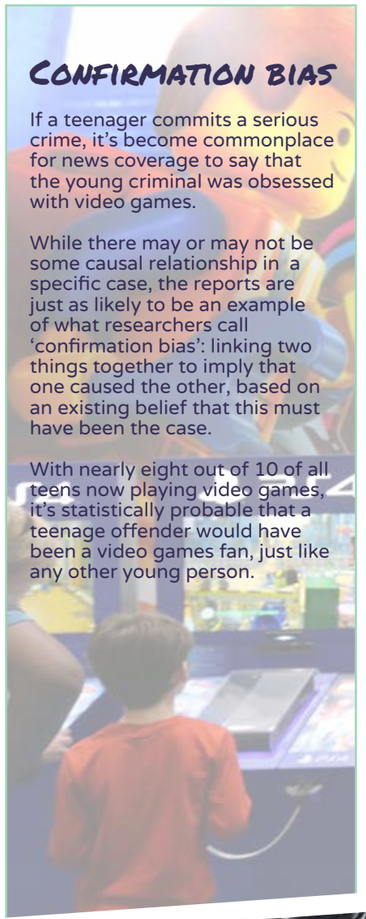
- Limit access to games and apps to about an hour a day.
- Screen time is not recommended for under-threes.
- Be 'engaged' in the games and apps that children are playing, so that you can provide guidance and information.
- Playing games with your kids is fun, and allows you to monitor their gaming. It can even help to maintain your relationship.
- Always consult PEGI age and content ratings before buying.
- Don't allow children to download content without your approval, and for young children set passwords for web access.
- Don't allow kids to meet strangers they know through a game.
- Talk to your children about the risks, and benefits, of gaming and the internet, so they can apply their own good judgement.

Confirmation bias

If a teenager commits a serious crime, it's become commonplace for news coverage to say that the young criminal was obsessed with video games.

While there may or may not be some causal relationship in a specific case, the reports are just as likely to be an example of what researchers call 'confirmation bias': linking two things together to imply that one caused the other, based on an existing belief that this must have been the case.

With nearly eight out of 10 of all teens now playing video games, it's statistically probable that a teenage offender would have been a video games fan, just like any other young person.



>> Studies from Palo Alto Research Center show that teenagers who played group games online felt they had gained leadership skills, such as motivating others, mediating in disputes, and leading mixed-age groups. Other research has shown that playing realistic sports video games can lead to more time spent playing sports and exercising in real life – a link that some platforms and technologies now actively encourage

It is thought that the best games hit some kind of a cognitive 'sweet spot' for children, whereby they are engaged and willing to learn because it's fun, while at the same time challenged – in a positive way – to improve their performance. Schools and colleges are incorporating video games into the classroom, and using this effect to boost teaching performance and bring a whole range of subjects, from maths to geography, to life in students' minds.

Real dangers

But while evidence mounts that moderate, regular video gaming can have multiple positive impacts on both young children and teenagers, there are caveats. Most studies suggest that an hour a day is the optimum gaming time, both for a child's happiness and for building valuable new skills. Much more and the positive effects can quickly turn into negatives. Variety is important too.

So the stereotypical view of a teen spending four hours a day, every day, on a first-person shooter *is* a cause for concern, not because they will become bad people, but because they are, without realising it, limiting their skills and their happiness, even if (to them) it feels like they're doing the opposite.

In younger children particularly, parental involvement and guidance in their gaming is recommended. For example, when playing a suitable role-playing or strategic game, parents can guide children to seek out more detailed information online about the places or history associated with a game. PEGI ratings can also help to inform parents about a game's content, and help to guide them regarding its suitability.

Online games, meanwhile, require parental involvement to ensure that children are not sharing personal or private information with other online players, and are not being bullied within a virtual world, for example. And it goes without saying that children should never arrange to meet up with unknown online players in real life.

At the very least, therefore, any parents who are still worried about video games and the risks of violence, antisocial behaviour and laziness, should balance those beliefs with all the growing evidence about the benefits – some of which are surprising and encouraging. And from that research, it's clear that the key issue is not *whether* children are playing games, but for how long and under what circumstances. With parental guidance, moderation, common sense – and variety – games can be a boon, not a threat, to a child's emotional, social, and even physical development.

And adults can enjoy them just as much too: they can be family activities, bringing parents and children together, not just solitary or online-only experiences. ❑

MODERATE GAMING CAN IMPROVE SKILLS, BUT EXCESSIVE GAMING HAS NEGATIVE IMPACTS

Elearning tablets

Any parents of younger children who are reluctant to let them near an iPad or smartphone, might consider 'elearning' tablets. These either block internet access completely, or limit access to 'approved' educational content, apps, games, and friends.

LeapPad devices, for example, are ruggedised child-friendly tablets that offer a selection of pre-loaded educational games, apps, and ebooks that have been approved by the company's dedicated 'educator team' to ensure that they only provide children with content that may improve their reading, science, maths, and reasoning skills.

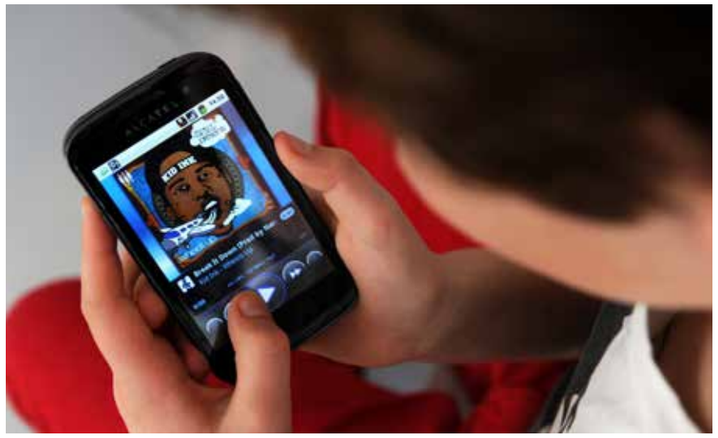
Likewise, the InnoTab devices from VTech offer a multimedia touchscreen experience designed specifically for children. The InnoTab 3S, for example, is a wifi elearning tablet that comes with 19 pre-installed apps, including Kid Connect Premium and Movie Maker. Again, children can only access pre-loaded, pre-approved websites, or additional content that has first had password-protected parental approval.

The VTech Kid Connect Premium app allows children to exchange texts, voice messages, photos, and other content to and from other InnoTab devices – as well as Android and iPhone smart phones – but only with friends and family on a list that has been approved by parents. Devices can be set with a daily limit usage and only for use at set times of the day.

A slightly different approach comes from Android Nabi devices, which can operate in 'Parent' mode with full Internet access, or can be switched to 'Nabi' mode via a password so that children can only access online sites, apps, games, and friends lists that have been pre-selected by parents.

Glick and connect

How kids are using their mobiles today tells us how we'll all be using them tomorrow. Chris Middleton spoke to US TV star Alexis Glick about what running a sports-based youth organisation has taught her about children's internet usage.



> IF YOU DON'T STAND FOR SOMETHING, THEN KIDS WON'T WANT YOUR BUSINESS!

Alexis Glick is the former Wall Street analyst who became a well-known TV anchor and Director of Business News for America's Fox News Channel. But five years ago she got out of finance and journalism and focused her skills on her two *real* passions: sports and youth education. Today, she's CEO of non-profit organisation GENYouth, which encourages child health and fitness through sport.

One of the key ways in which her organisation reaches out to her community of users – US schoolchildren and teens – is via understanding the power of social networks and mobile apps. So what lessons has Alexis learned about the future of digital technology for all of us, based on how US schoolkids are using it today?

CIS spoke to Alexis in New York. "Well, it's remarkable," she says. "It shakes you to the core. We live in a world today where we have no idea just how much apps and mobile media are going to revolutionise the way that children learn, and the way they'll consume in the future. Cable television? The notion that the next generation, today's children, are going to pay for cable television? They're not!

"Children today use their mobile devices for everything," she explains. "And we see kids use them in a more profound way day in, and day out. So [in the future] in education, for example, apps and devices will be embedded in everything. And even how you order your food, how it gets delivered, how you view the headlines, where you park your car... its all going to be completely determined by mobile technology for this emerging generation of users."

What Glick has learned from the kids whom she meets through her organisation is that the physical world around us will increasingly be impacted by the devices in their, and our, pockets. And how young people are using technology today is already changing how one of Glick's passions, sport, is being presented to them, and to older audiences, in the US.

American sports stadia, such as Levi's in Santa Clara, California (home of the San Francisco 49ers) are already becoming mobile-enabled so that people in the crowd can order food and branded goods during a match. Those items are delivered directly to them in their seats, while they watch instant replays of points on their phones – something that children, in particular, love to do.

And that's not all, she says: kids are doing some surprising and counter-intuitive things with their mobile technology too, such as watching live events via real-time streams of *still* images, rather than on video platforms.

"Kids are living on Instagram," she explains. "They're not living on Twitter, and they're not living on Facebook, that's for sure! But you'd think that Instagram is this static thing, using still images, but their likes [on it] are strongly influencing their decision-making [in other areas]."

So what is the main lesson for Glick, about how kids in America are using their smartphones? "Kids will never know a world in which they're not dependant on their devices," she warns. "So the biggest hurdle is how to break through all the 'noise'. How do you get the attention of a kid who is bifurcated [via technology] and is choosing where they want to be every minute of every day?"

This begs the question as to what problems might arise for children as they become overreliant, perhaps, on their phones and on their mobile or wifi connections. "The biggest risk is that they're multitasking constantly, they're constantly on their devices," says Glick. "So the downside is the degree to which they're 'in the moment' with other kids. Eye contact, relationships, relationship management... they're all a problem for them."

But despite the risks, there are other, more positive, impacts from the always-on, data-driven culture in which young people already exist, she says, and which we will inhabit very soon: absolute transparency and layers of embedded information.

"Kids want to know where everything is sourced from," she says. "They want to know where the food is coming from, they want to know if it's farmed to table, and if any antibiotics have been used [in its production]. They want to know who made that sweater.

"And oh, by the way, for any retailers out there, for any corporations: if you don't stand for something, if you're not doing something that's good and that provides a vehicle for giving something back to your community, then kids won't want your business!

"A big piece of the DNA of successful brands today is that they stand for something," she explains. "And this generation of kids has an expectation that who they do business with, and the products they purchase, are doing something to help the community and to help the environment. If not, then you're going to get left by the wayside."

It's generally accepted by technology commentators that UK digital usage trends lag behind those in the US by about two years. So, UK companies take note: you have two years to get your acts together if you want to keep young people's loyalty and custom! ❑

Chris Middleton spoke to Alexis Glick at the NRF 15 Retail conference in New York, January 2015.

Ask the
EXPERT

TONY ANSCOMBE
AVG TECHNOLOGIES

ISP FILTERING

Will ISP filtering satisfy all of the family's internet safety needs?

It's welcome news that the UK's four main ISPs are now filtering adult content by default. But the main responsibility for child internet security rests in the home, not outside of it.

Sky is the latest broadband provider to block adult content by default following David Cameron's call for UK ISPs to make online filtering mandatory last year. The Sky Broadband Shield is now live for the provider's 5.3 million users, and it's designed primarily to prevent children from being exposed to inappropriate content.

With the UK's big four ISPs – BT, Virgin Media, Sky, and TalkTalk – all now running similar filters, ISPs are acknowledging their responsibility to safeguard the digital generation from explicit content online.

But should it just be up to them? As ISPs are ultimately responsible for the delivery of online content, they should certainly shoulder a significant portion of responsibility for safeguarding children on the web. In many ways they have a duty of care to today's children in a world in which parents and guardians can't be there every minute of the day.

So filters such as Sky's do mark a turning point, but it would be naïve of parents to rely solely on an ISP to keep their children safe – and as adults can choose to opt out of blocking adult content in the home, it's safe to assume that some will.

As CIS magazine explores every issue, child internet safety is about far more than just adult content. This is why children must be equipped with the right knowledge, not only to help them deal with inappropriate material should they be exposed to it, but also to make moral (right and wrong) and ethical (code of conduct) decisions about their, and other people's, online behaviour.

That responsibility lies with parents, teachers, and youth workers. But recent research [*by security company AVG, for whom Anscombe works*] shows that almost half of UK parents (46 per cent) believe that responsibility for making the internet a safer place for children lies with someone else – with 14 per cent identifying that 'someone' as their ISP.

Encourage open and honest dialogue about internet activity. Take an interest in what your child is doing online. Remember: responsibility for keeping children safe is not one person's, or one organisation's.

Abdicating responsibility in this way doesn't work, because the most important filters are a child's judgement and common sense. Yet the research also shows that 64 per cent of parents have never spoken to their child about adult content online, and that 70 per cent of children are unaware of the dangers facing them on the internet.

There are some quick and easy things that parents can do to better educate their children, and controls that can be put in place to keep them safe. First, set up parental controls. Most devices allow you to adjust specific parental control settings to set up the appropriate level of security for your child. Consider applying your own content or keyword filters, or setting up lists that exclude or include certain websites from the browser.

Second, manage children's screen time. Decide – or, better, agree together – what you think is an acceptable amount of time for them to spend online, and at what times of the day. It's important to include the time that they will need to do their studies.

Third, encourage open and honest dialogue about internet activity. Take an interest in what your child is doing online. Ask what they're up to – even if they're not interested in showing you! It's important to take the opportunity to participate in your child's digital life without making it feel like you're intruding. Pick your moments, find out what works, and simply be a presence – they'll be more open with you in return.

If there's one thing to remember, it's that responsibility for keeping children safe online doesn't just fall on one person's, or organisation's, shoulders. As adults – whether we're parents, teachers, youth workers, or we work for ISPs – we're all in it together.

Tony Anscombe is an ambassador and online safety expert at AVG Technologies, a vendor that provides internet security products.

Coming soon! See page 48.

The Child Internet Safety Summit 2015 takes place on 3 July 2015 in London. Turn to our back page (page 48) for more details.

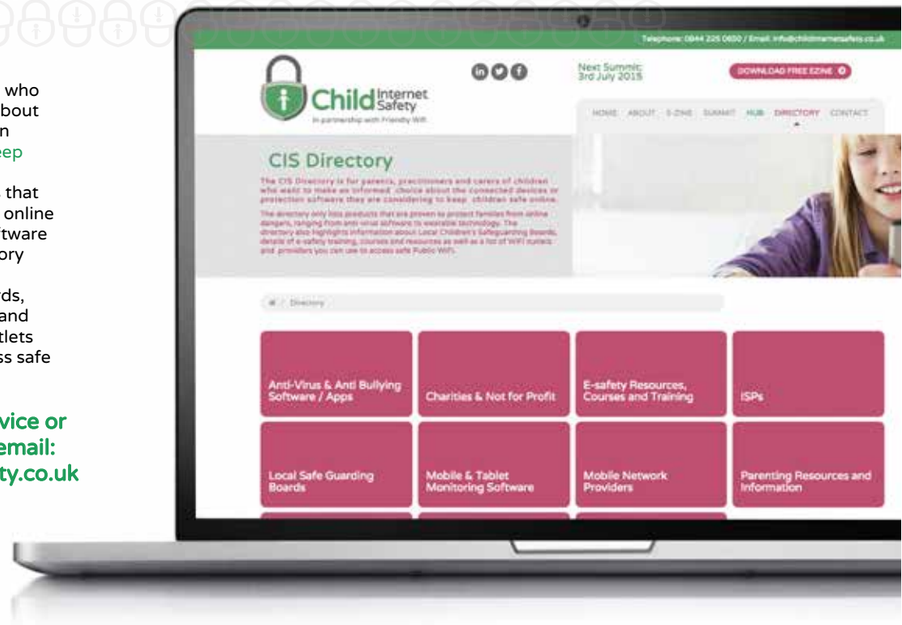
The CIS Directory
PROVEN to protect!

Visit:
www. http://www.childinternetsafety.co.uk/directory

The CIS Directory is for parents, practitioners and carers of children who want to make an informed choice about the connected devices or protection software they are considering to keep children safe online.

The directory only lists products that are proven to protect families from online dangers, ranging from antivirus software to wearable technology. The directory also highlights information about Local Children's Safeguarding Boards, details of esafety training, courses and resources as well as a list of wifi outlets and providers you can use to access safe public wifi.

To feature your product, service or device in the CIS Directory, email: directory@childinternetsafety.co.uk



Teaching eSafety

How do you teach esafety to vulnerable young people when they think they know more about the digital world than you do? Richard Freeman explains.

Can you teach a young person to be safe online? Of *course*, we say, yes – just as you can teach someone about expectations or consequences in any area of personal safety or individual responsibility. There are facts and case studies, and in the arena of child welfare and safeguarding there are many excellent people conducting brilliant research all the time. That's the good news.

So, is online safety as straightforward to learn as, say, how to lift a heavy object safely, or how to apply CPR? No. The reality is that teaching children about personal internet security is much more difficult than teaching health and safety or first aid, because it touches on complex emotional and psychological issues, such as communication, human relationships, trust, honesty, privacy, sharing, common sense, and a great many more besides.

In some ways, a closer comparison is with sex education. Remember when you first learnt about human reproduction, with all the talk of fertilisation, fallopian tubes, and gestation? All of those explanations and diagrams felt as far removed from the reality of meeting someone special as it was possible to be.

The point is that with sex education, you can teach young people about how both male and female bodies work with approved textbooks, but teenagers learn about the reality of puberty and relationships from personal experience, from older friends or siblings, or even – God help us – from *EastEnders* and other dramas.

So for teachers and parents, sex and relationships education can involve a timid and giggle-inducing explanation of things that feel completely different to the reality – so different, in fact, that some young people find it hard to take all our hard work seriously!

> **"To appear to intrude on children's digital spaces is to appear to intrude on their private feelings."**

But despite these similarities, teaching online safety presents its own, unique problems. With online safety, we have an opportunity to teach – and learn – in much more sensitive ways. And that's crucial.

Sensitive issues

We certainly need access to the facts, the case studies, and the clear guidance on what can go wrong when the internet turns dark, but as educators, parents, and youth workers, we also need to bear in mind that (for all of us) online spaces are as intensely private and personal as they are public, collaborative, and exposing.

Getting young people to understand those distinctions can be the toughest challenge, and often they think that's it's *we* who don't understand. Part of their instinctive resistance to being taught about the online world comes from the fact that they populate social platforms with their own thoughts and feelings (as we all do). So to intrude on those spaces, or to appear to do so, is to intrude on those feelings.

One of the hardest things in teaching is when a young person believes that they know more about something than you do, and when it comes to their online spaces youngsters instinctively feel: "This part of the world is new and it's mine. What knowledge do these older people have to share?"

Let's face it, many teens (and some younger children) *do* know more about the technologies than many adults, but they have a lot less experience of the world that exists outside of their mobile devices than we do. That's where the challenge is.

Curricular challenges

We know from Ofcom research that 12-15 year olds spend over 17 hours on average per week online – and it's probably closer to 17 hours a day in some cases! So schools and colleges are constantly looking at how internet safety can better inform their safeguarding and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) strategies. But often, esafety is still 'bolted on' when it's addressed in the classroom.

At national level too, esafety has been something of an awkward topic. When ICT became 'Computing' in the National Curriculum a few years ago, esafety was accidentally left out, only to be hurriedly inserted later [see Ken Corish's blog on this].

So, one of the challenges in teaching esafety is that many professionals and organisations

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are still unclear about where it sits in the teaching programme – and, therefore, whose responsibility it is. Should it be taught as a technical IT issue, or within Citizenship education, for example? Or is its natural place in English, in Media Studies, or as a component of careers advice? Does it belong in all five, and, if so, how can schools justify the time and expense? But if it's only taught as a Computing or careers issue, then how will all the other angles be addressed?

Ofsted asks a number of specific questions about this in its Schools and Common Inspection Frameworks, which have recently been extended to scrutinise how online radicalisation and religious/political grooming are being prevented by education leaders – another increasingly important element of esafety today.

Add all that together, and it's a huge amount of extra responsibility for teachers, who can't all be experts across such a broad spectrum of subjects – not to mention potential flashpoints. So in these constantly evolving and politically complex times, it's hardly surprising that third-sector child welfare agencies have stepped up to the plate with detailed resources and practical guidance for teachers, rather more than the government has.

Vulnerable children

Beyond headline-grabbing issues such as radicalisation, the 'day to day' challenges of esafety remain equally acute, with some surveys reporting that as many as one-third of young adults experience cyber bullying in some form.

In my professional career, I'm particularly concerned with how education providers approach online safety with young people who are already vulnerable, for example through special educational needs (SEN), social or emotional barriers, poverty, or mental ill health – problems that, in children, can be interlinked in challenging ways.

Here's just one example. A 17-year-old girl with whom I worked a few years ago used the Facebook status bar ('How are you feeling?', it sometimes asked) as a space to write introspective messages about bereavement and her own battles with suicidal thoughts.

She had decided that this space was suitable for an in-depth emotional journal, sharing private thoughts with an audience of onlookers as a way of managing her pain and self-doubt. But her network of friends, acquaintances, and contacts didn't know how to deal with what they were reading, which made them vulnerable too. As a result, the girl was bullied, until

> **"Just as we do with parks and city streets, we empower children to use their own judgement about safety, and about where not to go when it's dark."**

the act of writing about her own self-hate became an extension of other self-harming activities.

She was able to seek help – and was helped, you'll be pleased to know – but the key point is that for many teenagers, social media has massively disrupted the distinction between private and public spaces, and that's something that's incredibly hard to 'unteach'.

So one of the milestones in the journey towards esafety is for adults to recognise that, for some young people, the concept that their informal interactions with friends and family on social media (the small world) also nest within a public, permanent, unregulated, and searchable space (the big world) is literally incomprehensible.

Online, all their personal interactions seem familiar and confined – although they can be anything but – and so the trust that familiarity breeds can easily be manipulated by malevolent people. So how can we solve that type of problem?

Good esafety practice

In general, esafety monitoring would be much more effective by being less preoccupied with specific programmes, apps, or platforms. Recent pressure on Twitter to act on aggressive or abusive tweets has been successful, but that took nearly nine years.

In general, a lot of energy can be lost in lobbying individual companies to overhaul their policies, and once a campaign gets going young people have usually moved on and a different piece of technology is all the rage. For example, many teenagers now see Twitter as outmoded and use Instagram instead. Snapchat and Ask.fm have both been highlighted as platforms for risky behaviours and abuse, while Tumblr is often talked about in terms of porn. And so it goes on.

So if we focus on the broader principles of managing risk and of using protective behaviours, we are much more likely to maximise the impact, regardless of which app is in fashion.

Introducing children to online spaces early is also important. Just as we do with parks and city streets, we empower children to use their own judgement about safety, and about where not to go when its dark.

TIP: USE REAL-WORLD STORIES

College Central, a federation of pupil referral units in East Sussex, ensures that its students (some of the most vulnerable in the county) confront head-on the risks of sharing images online and offensive social media postings.

They explore real, relatable stories – such as that of the Kent Youth Crime Commissioner whose historic tweets betrayed naivety (at best) or racism (at worst) and cost her her job – as a route to understanding the potential permanence, online, of shared thoughts and images.

"What makes this learning hit a chord," says Anna Morse, the College's Head of Personalised Foundation Learning, "is that what's being discussed isn't theoretical; it's very real."

> **"Monitoring would be much more effective by being less preoccupied with specific programmes, apps, or platforms. Focus on the broader principle of managing risk."**

2014 research from the Oxford Internet Institute concluded that restrictive esafety practices (such as bans and firewalls) generally don't work. Teenagers, in particular, must have some capacity to regulate their own browsing, as long as they're prepared to be open and transparent with their parents, carers, and/or their teachers.

Agreements like this encourage young people to take responsibility for their own behaviour, but they also make it clear that parents and teachers are saying: "I'm going to ask questions. I want to understand what you're doing and how you're doing it, because your safety is my priority – but your life online is yours."

Educators and parents should consider 'digital literacy' as being equally as important as reading, writing, and face-to-face social skills, and it should cover everything from file storage and password management to internet security settings and tone of voice when using mobile communications.

Knowledge and common sense are always key, but digital literacy should also recognise that using the web is not an isolated practice, separate from other activities. Just as we do in our face-to-face interactions with people, we should engage our own emotional intelligence online to decipher clues, risks, trust issues, and triggers for negative behaviour in others, and as we get older our instincts about these things become more acute.

From our perspective, it can sometimes appear that young people spend too much of their time gazing into their phones, and so we worry that they may not be learning enough about human beings in the real world. In this sense, all young people are potentially vulnerable, not just those who are already facing challenges in their lives. Youngsters' differing social media experiences magnify the stark differences between those who 'get' the 'big world vs small world' politics of it all, and those who don't.

The internet is always available and it offers quick access to other people who don't feel like strangers – and for teens who suffer with anxiety, social awkwardness, or other problems, that can actually be a major plus, and sometimes even a lifeline (it's all too easy to focus only on the threats).

So one thing is clear: the tipping point between healthy and unhealthy usage is not always easy to determine, or to govern, and it's tempting for adults to be either too restrictive or too liberal.

One way to strike the right balance is to ensure that we root all of our discussions in reality, basing our guidance on evidence and not on assumptions. This gives families and schools much more credibility when opening up discussions on safe internet use.

We're only just beginning to measure the impact that mass, 24/7 connectivity is having on our lives, and so many of our arguments about esafety stem from fear of the unknown. But one thing we can be certain of is that technology will continue to evolve – and at speed.

So if we're to teach youngsters how to stay safe online, then the best conversations we can have with them will be about trust and self-awareness, and focus on real consequences rather than on our own, often abstract, fears. ❑

"One way to strike the right balance is to ensure we root all of our discussions in reality, basing our guidance on evidence and not on assumptions."

TIP: USE SOCIAL MEMES

Around the world, teachers are creating their own social media experiments to show how easy it is for content to spread uncontrollably online – you may be familiar with some of these from your own Facebook walls.

For example, in February of this year, a primary school teacher in Crewe posted a picture of herself holding a message to her class; within 72 hours it had been seen by 1.5 million people and shared in 92 countries. She had skilfully made her point!

Child Internet Safety 2015

SUMMIT 2015

The third annual Child Internet Safety summit is taking place on Friday July 3rd at the QEII Conference Centre, Westminster, in London. www.childinternetsafety.co.uk

This day-long event is designed around interactive sessions, inspiring speakers, and panel discussions, together with opportunities to network with some of the world's leading child safety experts and companies.

Speakers and panel members include...

Bill Thompson, technology journalist for the BBC, *The Guardian* and other publications; the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary; Helen Goodman, Shadow Minister Work & Pensions; Claire Lilley, Head of Child Safety Online, NSPCC; Julian David, CEO, TechUK; Tony Anscombe, Online Security Evangelist, AVG Technologies; Alex Holmes, Anti-Bullying Programme Manager, The Diana Award; Andy Brennan, Deputy Director of CEOP Command, NCA; Garry Shewan, Assistant Chief Constable, ACPO; Professor Andy Phippen, Professor of Social Responsibility in Information Technology, Plymouth University; David Brown, HMI, OFSTED; John Carr OBE; and Joe Hayman, Chief Executive, PSHE Association.

Plus: An esafety performance by Bigfoot Arts Education.

Benefits of attending

- Opportunities to network with high-level child safety experts.
- Keep abreast of the latest government policy and initiatives, and have your say.
- Find out about ground-breaking products that are actually achieving real successes in preventing online abuse.
- Obtain the latest government guidance and policy updates.
- Study current research that is helping to shape future online safety strategies.
- Discuss key public issues such as investment and accountability, as well as industry collaboration.
- Gain valuable cross-government and cross-industry insights.
- Explore the challenges faced by ICT teachers in schools when trying to promote safety online.
- Understand how social services and health professionals can assist in tackling the effects of online child abuse.
- Discuss how to work in collaboration with industry partners to ensure you are giving your students/children the best chance of being protected while online.

You will be one of over 300 delegates, all of whom have the same concerns and interests. You'll have the opportunity to share your experiences, ideas, and worries with colleagues who are facing the same or similar challenges.

With coffee breaks throughout the day and an hour for lunch, you will be provided with plenty of time and occasions to network and discuss the day's events!

Child Internet Safety