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ORMISTON FORGE ACADEMY

RESILIENCE
ASPIRATION
RESPECT

Online Safety Newsletter → April 2024

SAFER SCHOOLS

The online world can be a bit overwhelming at times but it is important we understand what our children are doing online so we can help make them safer. The Safer Schools App aims to help with this.

At the Forge we are delighted to partner with Safer schools and we would like to invite you to download our Safer Schools App.

Your child will been using the student version of the app throughout the year. In the past it has proven to be a useful source of information about the online world and how to navigate it safely.

Parent access code:
7675

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NSPCC

The NSPCC are now providing free online safety workshops for parents and carers. These workshops provide information about how to support children in their online world. The pre-recorded presentation covers topics such as online bullying, mental health and social media, as well as signposting to resources and organisations for help and support. Follow the link to access the resource https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/free-online-safety-group-workshops/

Report Remove

Having your images shared can be very scary. It is against the law for anyone to share a sexual image or video of someone under the age of 18. The Report Remove tool has been designed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) to help young people under 18 in the UK to report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet. Watch the video from the IWF to find out how it works.
https://youtu.be/SwSpo3N6CeE

REPORT REMOVE
Nude image of you online?
We can help take it down.

Clickbait

About one in five headlines online are clickbait, based on a study by Stanford University researchers. Clickbait has become pervasive across the internet, prioritizing grabbing users' attention over providing genuine information. While avoiding it entirely can be tough, there are ways to reduce its impact, particularly concerning young people who are more likely to be influenced by sensationalist headlines. In today's #WakeUpWednesday guide, we explore the risks associated with clickbait and share expert tips on how to navigate it safely.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about
CLICKBAIT

Clickbait is a controversial online marketing strategy which uses sensationalist (and frequently misleading) headlines to encourage engagement with an article, image or video – often playing on users' emotions and curiosity, while much of the actual content is of questionable accuracy. Clickbait is also sometimes used to disguise scams, phishing sites and malware.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

HARMFUL MISINFORMATION

Clickbait tends to play fast and loose with the truth, opting for eye-catching content over objectivity. This is particularly dangerous for younger internet users, who are generally more susceptible to that type of material. A child could be presented with fake news, misleading articles and – in some cases – outright lies without fully understanding what they're viewing and why it's harmful.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Due to the misleading nature of many examples of clickbait, what may seem to be innocuous and child friendly could actually contain age-inappropriate material such as extremist political views or violent, pornographic or sexually explicit content. This is clearly a hazard for young people, who could be upset, disturbed or influenced by exposure to such subject matter.

HIDDEN MALWARE

While most clickbait is simply trying to promote engagement to earn companies additional revenue, some of it does redirect to dubious sites with the potential to infect devices with viruses or malware. This could put a child's sensitive data – such as their name, their location and their date of birth – at risk of being accessed and exploited by malicious hackers.

PRIVACY PROBLEMS

Some clickbait leads to sites which could coax a child into volunteering their personal data – using pop-ups to ask them for their email address and phone number, for example, in exchange for accessing additional content or subscribing to various services. Normally, this harvested information is then sold to third parties, who often utilise it for targeted adverts and other sales schemes.

A DRAINING DISTRACTION

Clickbait encourages spiralling consumption of online content, which could easily result in a young person spending hours scrolling aimlessly instead of doing something productive or interacting with family and friends. This can leave them tired, asocial and lacking focus – and, in the long term, can negatively impact their social skills, education and mental wellbeing.

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

Depending on the type of clickbait a child is interacting with, you might notice negative changes in their behaviour. Weight loss scams, for example, are common among clickbait and have the potential to influence eating habits and body image – while deliberately inflammatory 'rage bait' articles can leave impressionable young people feeling irritable, restless or argumentative.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START A CONVERSATION

The sheer volume of clickbait can make protecting children against it quite challenging. It's vital to talk to young people regularly about the types of content they encounter online, so that they understand the risks of engaging with clickbait. If you're still concerned, it may also be wise to keep an eye on children's online activity to ensure they're not being tempted by clickbait headlines.

PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Encouraging children to question the legitimacy of sensational headlines and too-good-to-be-true promises will help them to become savvier online – and far less likely to be drawn in by clickbait content. These critical thinking skills will also serve to protect them in other areas of the digital world where misinformation is becoming increasingly common.

SPOT THE TELLTALE SIGNS

There are certain common elements in clickbait, including headlines and images that use shock and outrage to grab people's attention – as well as numbered lists, such as "8 Facts You Won't Believe Are True". Some clickbait combines several of these tactics to snag users' interest. Learn to recognise these techniques for yourself so you can teach children to notice them as well.

TAKE CONTROL

Many parents opt to place limits on how long their children can spend online each day, which obviously reduces the chance of exposure to clickbait. Alternatively, most internet-enabled devices have built-in controls that allow parents to manage what sort of online content their child can access – including filtering by age, which can screen out a percentage of inappropriate material.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology writer with more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, she is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant who writes for Forbes, TechRadar and Wired, among others.

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