EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL LITERACY
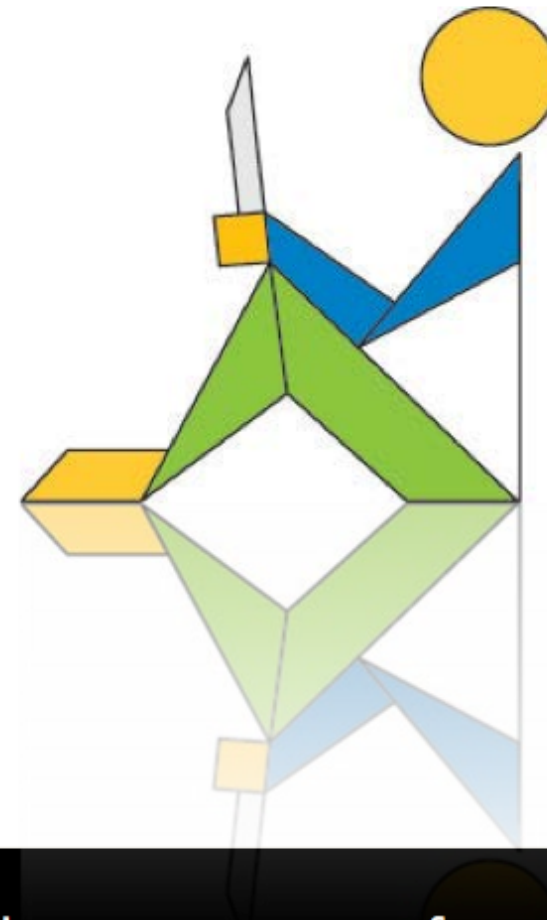
BE a PRO with Technology

You don't have to be a technical whiz to **"BE a PRO"** with technology!

With credible research from information security experts, public health professionals, law enforcement, digital literacy experts, and media psychologists, iKeepSafe identified six simple concepts to help you keep your students **safe** and **connected** with digital devices.

The following pages provide specific information and simple activities so that *everyone*—young and old, digital expert and novice—can **BE a PRO** online.

You're encouraged to review this information with the students in your life and have an open dialog about its contents.

BALANCE
ETHICAL USE
a
PRIVACY
REPUTATION & RELATIONSHIPS
ONLINE SECURITY

Students today spend **more time engaged with media** than they do in any activity other than sleeping [1]. And who can blame them? The online world is loaded with interesting and entertaining activities designed to capture and hold our attention.

While young people participate in a number of positive activities online, such as using the Internet for school work (85%) [2], and staying in touch with friends they rarely see in person (82%) [3], there are some downsides too. One of these downsides is **spending too much time with technology.**

According to studies conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Sesame Workshop [4], 8-year-olds in the U.S. spend as many hours engaging with various screens as they do in school, and preschoolers are spending about four hours per day on media—far **more than they devote to reading and outdoor play!**

Research shows that young people look to adult role models to learn how to conduct their online lives [5], so it's important for us to **be mindful of our own time with digital media**. Achieving a healthy balance between online and offline activities is a lifelong skill that we can all learn and practice together.

TIPS

✱ Share these recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) with yhour students ant their families:

   -No TV or screen use for the first two years.
   -Limit screen time to two hours per day after two.
   -Make children's bedrooms "electronic media free."

✱ Help your students select creative alternatives to digital media consumption.

✱ Dr. Rolando Diaz, clinical psychologist in a private practice, recommends no screens the last hour before bed for improved rest, health, and reduced anxiety. Keep this in mind when assigning online homework.

ACTIVITY

Have students keep a media log for one day tracking how many minutes they use on all connected devices (computers, cellphones, TVs, games, tablets). Ask them to reflect on what time they felt was valuable and where there was waste. Challenge them to go media free for one day. Talk about what they learned.

LEARN MORE

Take a "CyberWise Certified" Course on Balance

Visit the CyberWise Balance Learning Hub

How Too Much Time Online Might Affect ADHD

Too Much Time Online

Online Time v.s. Family Time

When Internet Use is Too High

Screen Time and Our Mental Health

Keeping a Balance with Real Life When Gaming Online

Get our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

Should I share that unflattering photo of my friend on Facebook? Is it okay to download a song I don't have rights to? Is this news or just gossip?

The online world constantly calls upon us to make **ethical decisions** like these.

While these questions are challenging for adults, just imagine how tricky they must be for young people who are still developing the **cognitive skills required for ethical thinking**. In fact, research from the Harvard School of Education's GoodPlay Project indicates that most young people are devoid of ethical thinking or consideration for others when using the Web. [1]

In the past adults have played an important role in helping young people with ethical decisions. But when it comes to Internet spaces, kids got there first, and **adults are largely absent from the online** world where children and youth need ethical guides the most.

By talking together about issues like **plagiarism, piracy, hacking**, and more, we can help young people understand that a decision made today can have lifelong consequences.

Additionally, it's critical to have regular discussions about the risk of taking, sending and/or viewing obscene content. Though 75% of US teens say sending sexually suggestive content "can have serious negative consequences," **39% have sent or posted sexually suggestive emails or text messages** [2]. In addition to the serious legal ramifications of "sexting," there is compelling evidence that pornography has serious negative effects on children [3]. Medical research confirms that exposure to violent media is highly correlated with aggressive behavior. It is also illegal in every state to provide pornography to children.

Helping children and youth clearly understand the ethical expectations of their schools *and* society is a **responsibility we all share**.

TIPS

* Make sure your students **know your expectations** for content they view and create. Help them understand long term consequences of viewing violent or pornographic content.

* Use technology—filtering and monitoring software—to help you manage **what** comes into your school and when kids have access to it.

* Ask students to read and abide by the terms of use of each platform or site they visit.

* Teach students to avoid stealing of any kind, to always acknowledge when they use ideas taken from another source, and to accurately represenst authorship.

* Remember to teach the Golden Rule of digital citizenship— respect other citizens, online and off.

ACTIVITY

Create classroom guidelines for good sharing practices. Engage in activities that reinforce these guidelines and point out how some posts don't meet your expectations.

LEARN MORE

Take a "CyberWise Certified" Course on Ethical Use

Visit the CyberWise Balance Hub

Cheating and Technology

Downloading Music and Videos Legally

Pornography Impacts Kids

What is Really Meant When You Hear the Phrases Netiquette or Online Ethics?

How Do I Correctly Cite Internet Sources?

Getting and Giving Respect Online

Get our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

The American Library Association describes a digitally literate person as someone who **"understands the relationship between technology, life-long learning, personal privacy, and stewardship of information."** [1] Understanding what personal information is safe to share online—and what is not—is a critical aspect of modern life. According to experts at Reputation.com:

Sharing personally identifiable information such as home addresses, phone numbers, and excessive photos should always be avoided. It's important to establish early the difference between personal and public information.

*As children get older, focus on **reinforcing that message**, but also explain the nuances between public and private sharing. By the time kids are in high school, they should be **keeping most of their personal information private**, but they should also consider **using the Internet to share positive content** about themselves to build a strong online reputation to attract college admissions officers and potential job recruiters later in life.*

LEARN MORE

Take a CyberWise Certified Course on Privacy

Visit the CyberWise Privacy Hub

Posting Photos of Children Online

The Myth of Online Anonymity

What is the Norm for Privacy Settings on SNS?

What Does Data Privacy Mean to You?

Why Locking Your Tablets and Cell Phones is Critical

Get Our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

TIPS

Reputation.com recommends the following specific guidelines for each age group:

Elementary School Kids should NEVER share (their own or another's):

* Age
* Full Name
* Address
* Phone Number
* Name of School
* Password Information
* Images (with possible exceptions depending on parental involvement, for example, sharing a child's award on a family blog)

Middle School Kids should NEVER share (their own or another's):

* Age
* Full Name
* Address
* Phone Number
* Name of School
* Password Information (even to friends)
* Most Images (at this age, kids get into social networking and will be sharing images via cell phones and digital cameras. Parents should focus on limiting the images their children share online)

High School Kids should NEVER share (their own or another's):

* Address
* Phone Number
* Password Information (even to friends)
* Offensive or Sexually Suggestive Images or Messages

ACTIVITY

Teach your students how and why to make strong passwords on cell phones and tablets. Review **the privacy settings of the social networking services your students use most.**

All of us want our students to have **safe and healthy relationships.** Today, young people maintain relationships on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, and in online games… that is, when they're not texting!

U.S. teens send an average of **3,364 mobile texts per month**, more than doubling the rate of the next most active group [1]. Fully **95% of all young people ages 12-17 are now online** and **80% of those online teens are users of social media sites** [2]. Research shows that the majority of kids' online relationships are with people they already know and in general, contrary to adult concerns, time spent online does not mean they are spending less face-to-face time with their friends. Social media, it turns out, actually facilitates (and strengthens!) offline interaction [3].

Although 70% percent of people worldwide say that the Internet has improved their relationships [5], occasionally unhealthy or even dangerous relationships can develop. In addition, research shows **90% of boys and 70% of girls aged 13 to 14 have accessed sexually-explicit content at least once** [6]. Compelling evidence confirms that exposure to pornography will affect youths' ability to form and maintain healthy relationships. [7]

Surprisingly, when researchers from Pew Internet asked teens, "Who has been the biggest influence on what you think is appropriate or inappropriate when you are using a mobile phone or going online?," 58% of respondents said their parents, with "friends" following with only 18% [5].

This is good news for adults! Why not take a step through this open door and **talk to your students about maintaining safe and healthy online and offline relationships**. iKeepSafe offers some terrific tips to get this conversation started.

TIPS

Initiate classroom discussion on this important topics. Ask:

✳ How might these technologies hurt your relationships?

✳ Have you ever felt pestered or overwhelmed by digital communication from a friend or boy/girlfriend?

✳ Some students are pressured to send a sexually explicit text or photo. Has this happened to you? How can we handle these uncomfortable situations to prevent them from happening?

ACTIVITY

Have your class brainstorm strategies for reporting cyberbullying behavior they may view online (i.e., placing a box at the front of the class for anonymous reporting, etc.). There are many excellent resources available to help you teach students preemptive and proactive strategies that will help them avoid or stand up to cyberbullying. Our Cyber Civics™ curriculum (below) includes an entire unit on cyberbullying.

LEARN MORE

Take a "CyberWise Certified Course on Online Relationships (coming soon)

Visit the CyberWise Relationships Learning Hub

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying: How Young Does It Start?

Digital Dating Abuse Is a Pervasive Problem

Facebook Grieving—How Social Media Helped Us Say Goodbye

Learning in Times of Facebook Trauma

What Is So Wrong with Sexting?

How Many Online Friends Do You Have?

The Positive Power of Online Collaboration

Connecting Grandparents and Grandkids through Technology

How to Help Kids Deal with Betrayal Online

Get our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

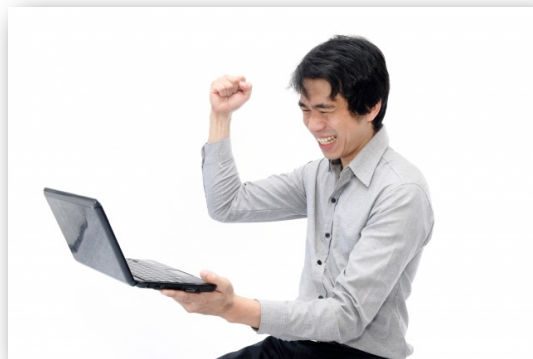Everything we post online—and everything that others post about us—contributes to our **permanent, digital reputation**.

While this is good news when the information is positive, it can be disastrous if negative or inappropriate comments or photos find their way online, because **there is no erase button on the Internet!**

It is important to help students understand that everything online is **persistent, searchable, replicable, and can be viewed by vast invisible audiences** [1]. In other words... *that photo they posted of themselves partying with a lampshade on their head? . . . it stays in the digital stratosphere forever, can be searched for and found by anyone* and everyone. It can be copied, reposted, shared, and viewed by strangers around the world. *Ouch!* That can hurt when applying for college or a job.

On the other hand, creative projects, awards, and documentation of service experiences can be an inspiration to other students and go a long way in setting yourself apart from other applicants.

While young people can't be expected to fully understand the **enormity of these consequences** (*who can for that matter?*), it is important for educators and students to **talk about how to manage their online reputations** and to agree on appropriate guidelines.

TIPS

Encourage your students to:

* Think before they share.

* Post positive items and accomplishments online for college recruiters and future employers.

* Consider replacing an immature or inappropriate email address with something more serious.

* Review posts on their own and on their friends' social networks. Discuss which images and posts might help their online reputation and which ones might hurt.

ACTIVITY

Ask your students to do an Internet search of their own name to see if they already have a digital footprint and learn what it says about them. Also do a separate image and video search. Discuss what they find.

LEARN MORE

Take a "CyberWise Certified" Course on Reputation

Visit the CyberWise Reputation Hub

Re-thinking Blog and Blog Venting—Consider Your Future

Digital/Online Reputation

Social Networks and Positive Online Reputation

Information is Permanent

What Should My Kids Understand before Posting or Viewing Videos on YouTube?

What to Do if My Child Has an Inappropriate Video on YouTube?

Hey Teens, Chances Are You'll Regret Oversharing Personal Information Online

Get our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

OBSERVING GOOD HABITS FOR SECURING HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

ONLINE SECURITY

With all the exciting things the digital world has to offer, it's easy to overlook **simple strategies that can keep us safe online**.

Research shows that in terms of online security, most people fall short [1]. As a result, **one in six** Americans will be the victim of identity theft [2].

This may sound daunting, but by following a few simple strategies, **even adults with limited technical skills can help their students be safe and secure online**. As the primary gatekeepers and managers of children's Internet experience [3], it's our responsibility as adults to **protect sensitive data**, **maintain secure networks,** and to **filter and monitor access** shared by children.

Start by having a conversation with your entire class about **choosing secure passwords and keeping them in a safe place**. Talk about the importance of **backing up data** and **installing anti-virus software. Teach students how to adjust the privacy settings on the search engines and the social networking sites they use**, and gain a **general understanding of the hardware, software, and social platforms** your students visit the most. By reviewing the following guidelines you'll be well on the road to achieving online security.

LEARN MORE

Take a "CyberWise Certified" Course on Online Security

Visit the CyberWise Online Security Hub

New Recourse for Protecting Kids from Cyber Impersonation

Password Safety and Security

Blog Safety

Securing Your Wireless Internet

How Can I Avoid Spam and Phishing Scams?

Safe and Secure Online Banking

Get our Cyber Civics™ Curriculum

TIPS

* Back up your data.

* Keep all of your software current with automatic updating. These updates can help prevent personal information from being stolen.

* Install antivirus and malware protection.

* Protect your wireless network by using a network key (password), and set the password on your router, so router settings can't be changed without your knowledge.

* Use long passwords that contain a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.

* Use different passwords for different sites and mobile devices. Never use your email username and password for social media or other logins.

* Look for "settings" or "options" on social networking sites use to manage the personal information you share.

* Use passwords on all networks and personal devices that connect to your network. One weak link can leave all your devices vulnerable.

* Monitor and track all devices used by minors—cell phones, computers, game consoles, etc. Monitoring software and parental controls offered by your cell phone provider or other third party providers will help you monitor and direct when and where your kids go online and use their cell phones.

* Teach your students how and when to report stalking, harassment, inappropriate photos, and threats; all of these are prohibited on social media sites (like Facebook and Twitter), and often are punishable by law.

ACTIVITY

Have your students test the strength of their passwords at www.passwordmeter.com. Do the iKeepSafe Password Activity (page 2).

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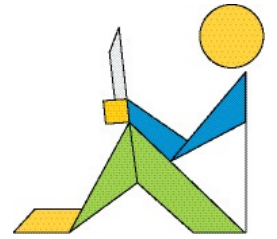
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in partnership with iKeepsafe

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