

# ONLINE INFORMATION SKILLS

## Staying Safe and Secure

There are many sites giving information about being safe and secure e.g.

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk),

and,

[www.direct.gov.uk/.../yourchildshealthandsafety/internetsafety](http://www.direct.gov.uk/.../yourchildshealthandsafety/internetsafety).

However, the basic things you should be aware and be careful of are:

- ❖ **Digital Footprints**, which records all your activities on the internet and websites you visit. This information is stored in the 'History' file of the web browser you use. Digital footprints are used for tracing criminal or illegal activities by experts when they need to investigate something. So never access websites or information you do not know about or is not of use to you.
- ❖ **IP (Internet Protocol) address** is a unique number for your computer just like a house number or telephone number. Without the IP address you can not access information from websites or other computers. IP addresses are used for tracing criminal and illegal activities by experts when they need to investigate something.
- ❖ **Chat Rooms** like MSN chat allows you to communicate with groups or one to one. Be careful of whom you chat with. Chat rooms can be dangerous as strangers can pretend to be someone they are not, so never give your personal details, passwords or any other information about your life to people whom you do not know in real life.
- ❖ **Forums** are discussion groups for people who have an interest in similar things and they chat, exchange information and ideas. Be careful what sort of forums you join as some are a front for illegal activities where people are 'groomed' or 'brain washed' into something that is totally wrong.
- ❖ **Cyber Bulling or Stalking** are dangerous acts which are hidden from people as they cannot see it, destroying lives and people. If you get anything disturbing or upsetting, save it in your history file and talk to a trusted adult. Do not suffer alone as there are people out there who will help you and put a stop to it. For more information go to <http://yp.direct.gov.uk/cyberbullying/>.
- ❖ **Phishing** is when people are fishing for your personal details and life to use for illegal activities. They may come through an email offering something outrageous like millions of pounds or it may be a fraudulent website offering and taking money without doing what they have promised. So:
  - Never go onto websites which you are not sure of or can verify as being credible.
  - Never give your passwords and always logoff any sites where you have used a password.
  - Never exchange any personal details about you or your life.

- ❖ **Computer Viruses** are dangerous. They affect and destroy your hardware [computer] or software [your files and programs]. Many types of viruses exist and new ones are being created all the time. Some strong viruses you should be aware of are:
  - Trojan Horses which destroy your files, programs and computer completely.
  - Spam which is 'Junk' mail from people and organisations who sent attachments or viruses through their mails by promising outrageous things in order to entice you to open them. Your computer can get affected through dodgy websites or email attachments. Never open anything you are not sure of or has been verified by a virus checker.
  - Malware virus can destroy your computer completely.
  - Spyware viruses spy on everything you do on the internet. It's good to have a spyware checker installed on your computer.
  - **'Popups'** can be offensive, distracting and annoying. They try to sell or advertise. Some can be fraudulent or hoaxes. Block any 'popups' from your web browser.
  
- ❖ **Social Networking** sites like 'Facebook' and 'Twitter' are for socialising with friends and relatives living in different parts of the world. Use 'Privacy' settings so that the people you know in real life can access your details. Be aware of 'stranger danger' and Identity theft which is a crime. Also be aware that universities and employers nowadays use the internet, including social networking sites, to check up on you.
  
- ❖ **Personal health** is important, so have a limit and take a break; it's good for your brain, eyes, hands, posture and well being. Get a life in the real world by doing things like reading, sports and socialising with friends.