

How do you make sure you stay safe online? Everyone who uses the internet needs to know how to use it safely. Read about online safety in the UK.

In the UK 96 per cent of young people regularly use the internet to communicate, according to a survey of 24,000 British people aged from 9 to 11. A report shows that only 40 per cent of young people know that personal information shared online stays online forever. There are about 250 million tweets generated every day and around 800 million Facebook users – that means a lot of information is shared online. So are young people using the internet safely?

Private or public

Do you know how to change your privacy settings on social media? For example, you can click on the 'flower' icon or on 'settings' on Facebook to get to your privacy settings. Then you can decide who sees your posts and personal information: friends, friends of friends or everyone. Do you want everyone in the world to be able to see your email address or just friends?

The BBC Share Take Care campaign is all about helping everybody, from little kids to the over-55s, to make their online activity safer and protect themselves on the web. The campaign says adults and teenagers need to be more careful with personal information and images online. An online security expert from the BBC was given only the names and the home town of two pairs of mothers and daughters in the UK and then he searched online for information that they had shared in social media. One mother and daughter pair are keen Twitter users. They had frequent personal Twitter chats that they thought were private but were in fact public! Now they both know that Twitter has a private messaging function and their chats really are private. The other mother was very embarrassed when the security expert showed her a picture of her partner in his underpants! She had forgotten about posting the photograph and quickly removed it. The security expert also found lots of their personal details like dates of birth, addresses, maiden names, favourite football teams and popstars. Nothing embarrassing, but potentially useful information for a cyber criminal.

Be kind and stay safe

Everybody knows that we should be polite and kind to people in real life and online. Unfortunately sometimes this doesn't always happen. Where can you report online abuse or unkind messages to yourself or your friends? Do you know how to report inappropriate content online? For example, if you see an inappropriate tweet on Twitter you can click on 'more' and then choose 'Report tweet'. You can then block all further tweets from that user.

Even well-liked celebrities can be targeted by cyberbullies. Tom Daley, the British Olympic diver, was abused online. His father died during the 2012 Olympic Games and Tom received some very cruel tweets about this.

Here are our top five tips for staying safe online:

1. Be nice! Treat people online as you do in real life.
2. Don't post anything online that you wouldn't want people in real life to see.
3. Check your privacy and security settings on social media sites and keep them as private as possible. Make sure you know exactly who can see your posts.
4. Don't ever post personal information like your home address, your email or your phone number.
5. If you see something online that worries or upsets you, tell an adult about it straight away.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day, or SID for short, tries to help people to use the internet correctly. SID started in 2004 and is organised in February every year in 74 countries around the world to promote safe and responsible use of online technology and mobile phones. Each year there is a different topic such as cyberbullying or social networking. The focus for SID's next campaign is 'Let's create a better internet together'. SID organisers want children and young people, parents and carers, teachers and educators, as well as industry and politicians to work together to build a better internet for all of us, but particularly for children and young people.

There are special lessons prepared for schoolchildren on Safer Internet Day in Britain. The UK Safer Internet Centre will be working with schools in the UK to encourage young people to help other people stay safe. You can find out about SID on this website: <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>