Tuesday TechTip:

Online activities of children

Today's wide availability of technology offers unlimited possibilities for young people to learn, inform, and socialize all without leaving the comfort of home. The internet enables children to participate in and even build their own on demand custom entertainment, education, and social environments without many of the limits their parents had at an equivalent age.

As a result, children are "wired" to the hilt and often far more tech savvy than their parents. This plugged in culture, however, comes with a price. Children face a new set of dangers while online and parents should arm themselves knowledge and tools to help combat potential online threats to children of all ages.

Tools and Tips for Parents

Here are some tips and online tools that can help protect your child from current online threats.

1. **Know the threats.** The proliferation of social networking sites and online collaboration software has given rise to new kinds of mischief and crimes. Labels like cyberbullying, sexting, cyberstalking, social engineering, and phishing can be serious threats to the identity and well being of child. Teens and 'tweens' can be particularly vulnerable to such mischief. Click on the above links to learn more.

2. **Partition your computer into separate accounts**. Most operating systems allow you to set up several different accounts. This will allow you to exercise more control over how your child uses the computer. Go to http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/Create-a-user-account to learn how to set up a separate account on Vista or http://support.microsoft.com/kb/279783 for XP.

3. **Keep your computer in an open area**. If your computer is in a high-traffic area, you will be able to easily monitor the computer activity. Not only does this accessibility deter a child from doing something she knows she's not allowed to do, it also

gives you the opportunity to intervene if you notice a behavior that could have negative consequences.

4. **Consider implementing parental controls**. You may be able to set some parental controls within your browser. For example, Internet Explorer allows you to restrict or allow certain web sites to be viewed on your computer, and you can protect these settings with a password. To find those options, click *Tools* on your menu bar, select *Internet Options*, choose the *Content* tab, and click the **Enable** button under Content Advisor.

5. **Know the lingo**. Do you know online lingo used in chat rooms and instant messaging? Do you know LOL? 57% of parents don't. Do you know what POS means when typed in an IM? 95% of parents don't. Check out the excellent cyber dictionary from Love Our Children USA and get educated about this constantly evolving online language.

6. **Communicate** online etiquette, rules, and dangers to your children. Talk to children about what not to share online and what sites are acceptable to visit. Take the time to spend some time "surfing" with your child and discuss what is found during these shared visits.

Lots of online resources

You are not alone. Partners include sites run by and for parents. These sites can help you get educated and provide information on the latest threats and tips:

Love Our Children USA. A great site with online parenting tips covering many different ages.

OnGuard Online. This is an excellent all around security awareness site offering sound advice on keeping kids safe online.

Net Smartz. An educational site catering to kids, parents, educators, and law enforcement in order inform all about potential online threats and consequences of some timely internet issues.

Don’t forget that it is Cyber Security Awareness Month.

Visit these sites to learn more about protecting your cyber assets at home and at work. Play games, watch videos, and access tools to help make you more cyber secure. Complete the Crossword challenge to be entered to win one of three prizes. Drawing takes place on Friday, 23 October at 3:00 PM. All entries are due by Friday, 23 October by Noon. Click here for full details.

CougarSecurity

StaySafeOnline

Missouri Cyber Security

Have a great Cyber Security Month!

Click here to check out archives of all TechTips and see the latest tips in action using Captivate!!!

For additional tips, check out the Technology Solutions Center self-service portal at http://help.ccis.edu