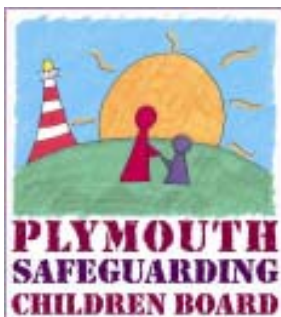


Safeguarding CyberWorld

Keeping Children and
Young People
Safe On-line



Tony Staunton

Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board

September 2008

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Safeguarding CyberWorld

**Keeping Children and
Young People
Safe On-line**

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This guide has been produced as an e-learning resource for adults associated with the care, well-being, safeguarding or protection of children in England.

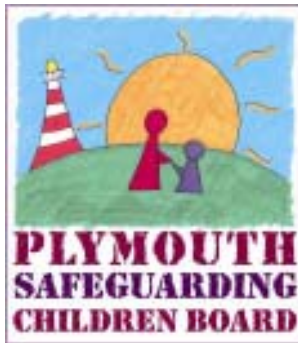
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All facts are correct at time of publication. The Internet and cyber technologies are expanding and evolving at speed, as is the impact of Cyber World on human behaviours in the real world. Care practitioners should expect to obtain regular updating on developments in this area.



**Written and produced by
Tony Staunton
September 2008**



Contents

● Introduction	Page 1
● CyberWorld	Page 2
Key Messages from Current Practice	
● The Byron Report: Defining the Problem	Page 4
● The Psychology of Social Networking	Page 6
● Young People Speaking: Peer Monitoring	Page 7
● Keeping Children Safe On-Line	Page 9
● “Safe On-Line” – The South West Grid for Learning	Page 10
● CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection	Page 12
● The Industry Leads	Page 14
● Internet and mobile Phones	Page 15
● NCH UK Technology Survey 2006	Page 16
● Multi-Agency Response: Towards Positive Use	Page 17
Key Messages from Research	
● Child Sexual Abuse on the Internet	Page 18
● Cyber-bullying behaviours	Page 19
● Health & Safety in Cyberworld	Page 19
● Sexual Offending and the Internet	Page 22
● The Growth in Abuse	Page 23
● Conclusions	Page 26
Appendices	
● Glossary of Terms	Page 27
● Bibliography	Page 33

1. Introduction

There is a new world offering new opportunities and new potential, particularly for the new generation who are accessing it. This world of new technology, known as Information & Communications Technology (ICT), exists within the real world but has rules and behaviours exclusive to it. CyberWorld offers knowledge, personal growth, extended relationships and fun. There are also new, exclusive dangers and challenges, particularly for children and young people.

Children should be safeguarded wherever they are, including in CyberWorld.

In November 2007, Becta, the organisation for the promotion of learning through technology, issued guidelines on behalf of the *Department for Children, Schools and Families* urging Local Safeguarding Children Boards to evaluate local e-safety measures as part of the *Every Child Matters* inspection process. The Government considered the inspection of e-safety measures and the monitoring of practices and procedures essential to ensure that policy is effective, that risks to children and young people are minimised and that, where incidents do occur, all responsible agencies deal with them appropriately.

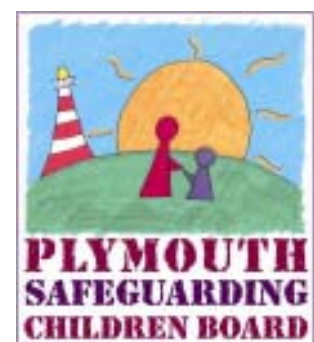
Plymouth's Safeguarding Manager commissioned the *Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board* to research the issues raised by *Becta* and formulate a local strategy for the development of Safeguarding and Child Protection online.¹ The following report offers a broad overview of current and predicted developments in on-line technologies, the benefits and risks for children and young people, the threats posed by predatory adults, and the safeguards that can be put in place.

It is written as a stand-alone public information package and training resource for Board partner agencies and practitioners, offering an overview of contemporary developments and issues. For consideration of the implementation of local multi-agency strategies and practices the Report should be considered alongside the *Becta* guidance "Safeguarding children on-line: a guide for Local Authorities and Local Safeguarding Children Boards"², and reports from the *South West Grid for Learning*.

A separate document of June 2008 lists the recommendations for action by the PSCB and partner agencies.

1 "Where the terms "e-safety" or "on-line" are used, we refer to all fixed and mobile technologies which children and young people might encounter, now and in the future, which allow them access to content and communications that could raise issues or pose risks to their wellbeing and safety." Becta 2007

2 <http://www.becta.org.uk/publications>





2. CyberWorld

Over 40 million people in the UK now regularly use the Internet. We have more mobile phones in use than there are people to use them. Digital technology for multi-media information exchange has created a new world – the Cyberworld of electronic communication, with children and young people more and more the masters of this new universe.

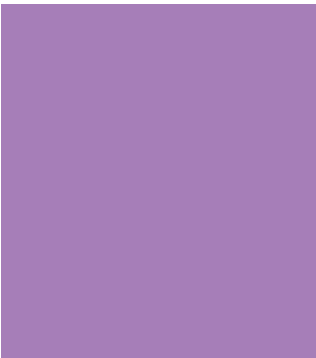
MySpace has 6 million users in the United Kingdom, and more than 100 million worldwide. Facebook has at least 90 million subscribers. Bebo has 3 million users in the UK, most under 25 years of age. Computers and Mobile Phones are changing the way people communicate, worldwide.

The children of the Internet Age are ready to bare their bodies and souls in a way their parents never could. There is no going back or censorship capable of closing all chatrooms and Social Networking Sites. The joining together of mobile phone and Internet technologies allows unregulated publication and sharing of personal profiles, video clips, photographs, sound recordings, written comments and documents.

There is a debate about the value of cyber-networking and gaming. But almost all of the current generation of young people are living in two worlds at once – the real world and the cyber-world - through new electronic technologies.

The experience can be exhilarating as well a time-consuming, is informative and fun but less educational than recreational, and can create long-lasting meaningful relationships with real people, as well as open-up new and dangerous risks of child abuse, bullying and intimidation.

There is broad interface between the real world and the world inside cyber-space. Behaviours in one shape and translate to the other, including the forming of relationships, testing social and personal potentialities, and developing new forums for self-expression and creativity.



Childhood and adolescence are stages of life where play, imagination, curiosity, exploration and experimentation are vital to learning and growing towards maturity. In Cyberworld, the culture of anonymity created by self-chosen nicknames offers a sense of safety within a technology that can store every piece of data forever, and track the cyber-persona back to the real-world person.

The things young people do when testing their own identity and independence are part of learning appropriate behaviour and positive social rules. Our actions used to be momentary - short-lived and quickly forgotten. Now the photograph or statement posted in haste and quickly regretted has been instantly downloaded on a mobile phone or the Internet, shared and stored in a thousand places to be resurrected as a reminder at any time throughout life.

One bad act can haunt a lifetime.



The only effective answer is to inform and empower children and young people to use a set of self-regulated social rules and protocols that will safeguard them and prevent abuse. We must work towards enhancing children's resilience, not only through an understanding of how the technology works and what it can do, but by enhancing social skills.

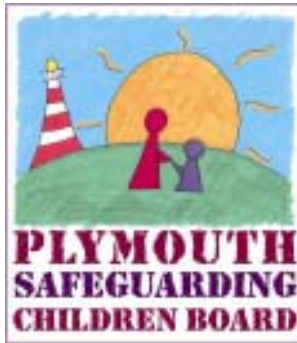
To become active participants in this information society, children now have to have far greater skills of information retrieval in order to access and interpret data, and, further, greater depths of critical thinking and analysis to be able to discriminate against information that may be biased or untrue.

At the same time, programmes of education regarding the Internet and mobile phone use need to extend far beyond the usual target audiences of children, parents and teachers. We need to provide understanding for those in the criminal justice system, social workers, probation officers and all people who may be at a point of contact for children who have been, or indeed are being, abused on-line so that we are best placed to tackle these issues.

Now, the UK Government is emphasising multi-agency working and the importance of shared knowledge, understanding and policies between agencies, to promote and ensure e-safety. The multi-agency approach is vital, with Local Safeguarding Children Boards having a lead role.

"We are at critical point at the cusp of the roll-out of the next evolution in communication technologies and now is the time to act in order to ensure a safer future for children on-line."

Rachel O'Connell, University of Lancashire



The Experience

What do we know of the uses and planned future developments of this cyberworld and the impacts upon relationships here in the real world? What is being done to help children and young people continue to have fun and stay safe on the Internet and mobile phone, and how can we help parents and carers manage the risks that children face?

A great deal of work is being undertaken by professionals from all sectors concerned with safeguarding children to consider and understand contemporary issues and experiences concerning children and new technology.

Lead practitioners from agencies including our *South West Grid for Learning*, Local Education Authorities including Plymouth, Devon and Wiltshire, the Police and Local Safeguarding Children Boards from Kent and Cornwall have learnt from practical examples of benchmark initiatives in Youth Work, Schools, and Policing. This multi-agency approach is vital, with Local Safeguarding Children Boards required to take a lead role.

2. Key Messages from Current Practice

2.1. The Byron Report: Defining the Problem www.dcsf.gov.uk/byonreview

Dr Tanya Byron is a clinical psychologist and author of *The Byron Report – “Safer Children in a Digital World”*, procured by the Government and published in March 2008 with all recommendations endorsed by the Prime Minister. The Report demands a greater understanding and involvement by all agencies, not just schools, in safeguarding and protecting children from abuse through Information and Communications Technology.

Representatives of lead corporate bodies including *Bebo*, *Vodafone* and *02*, have considered the newly published Industry Guidelines which reflect the successful outcomes of the Home Secretary’s Task Force on Safety on the Internet, ensuring a comprehensive and shared set of protocols between Industry, Health Education, law enforcement services and Social Care agencies to establish core standards.

The *Department for Children, Schools and Families* (DCSF) launched the UK Council for Child Internet Safety in September 2008, now responsible developing and leading a Child Internet Safety Strategy and advising the Government on e-safety.

The Byron Report faces-up to a major contemporary dilemma for safeguarding children. Britain has moved towards a risk-averse culture that seeks to protect rather than empower children. In addition, media hype feeds a moral panic made dangerous by poor reporting and big tragedies. This is potentially harmful to the effective safeguarding of children that requires a realistic and positive approach to empowering children to be in charge of themselves, socially aware and responsible.

The Byron Report has received global acclaim as “world-leading” and “unique”, bringing together contemporary knowledge of early child brain development, identifying children’s patterns of behaviour in the on-line world, observations of the interface between the real world and the virtual world of cyber-space, and risks to children from cyber-abuse.

“Those adults who work with particularly vulnerable children need to be familiar with the broad spectrum of on-line risks facing children, and how they can support and empower children and young people to address them.”

Tanya Byron

Technology is developing extremely fast. Soon, fridges will be able to automatically analyse the short supply of a staple food and e-mail Tesco with an order to deliver more without any human intervention.

Children’s video games such as *Wii* are developing peripheral hardware that simulate through electronically induced sensations, the intense experience displayed on screen, including being shot. There are many concerns:

- **Bullying**
- **Addiction**
- **Obesity & health risks associated with prolonged computer use**
- **Desensitising violence and intimacy**
- **On-line games – and who we are meeting on-line**
- **Gambling & gaming costs**

Research suggests that parents are not thinking of safety when considering their children’s relationship with mobile phones and computers, and need help to be informed and engaged with what is happening:

- **explore** the internet for fun, creativity and development
- **take ownership** of on-line as well as off-line worlds, and recognise the crossovers.

A great deal of research and understanding is still needed as to the effects of technology on child development, and especially brain development (not least, the frontal lobes that determine behaviour).

“The Joint Chief Inspector’s Review of Safeguarding should provide a comprehensive assessment of children’s internet safety across all children’s services in its 2010 report to Government.”

Tanya Byron



A balanced response is required. Clamp-downs create the impetus for alternative openings and can create secretive activities. Some children are more vulnerable than others to the dangers of technology, and those who are vulnerable on-line are generally (but not always) the same children who are vulnerable in areas of their life in the off-line, real world.

Censorship creates dark places where access will still be sought-after and available at greater risk. Games such as *Manhunt 2*, *Bully*, or *Grand Theft Auto IV* should be openly questioned and analysed by adults alongside children. Children should be helped to routinely question and develop critical awareness and honest consideration of the “benefits” of such games.

2.2. The Psychology of Social Networking: Sonia Livingstone

Ultimately, the technology does not create the vulnerability – it is not the cause but can have a real effect upon the level of existing vulnerability.

Sonia Livingstone, Professor of Social Psychology at the *London School of Economics* and probably the leading specialist academic in the UK on this subject, has researched the experience of *Intimacy, Privacy and Risk in Social Networking*, identifying the changing nature of childhood caused by the *World Wide Web*. Mobile phones and Internet social networking sites such as *Facebook* are finding young people having a lot of fun but facing new dangers.

To understand Cyberworld, adults have to listen to children and recognise they have a sophistication and ability to perceive levels of reality and relationships. Their world is complex within a fast-changing childhood: individualisation, consumerism, the decline of traditional (unaccountable) authority, an extended period of youth and corresponding parent-child tensions.

Livingstone observes significant change as well as continuity: “We have always wanted to display our identities and show what we can do and why we are.” Social Networking amplifies the potential for display. Using *Facebook* involves checking friends profile updates - a mundane and repetitive, time-consuming process – checking-out minute changes in friendship relations and way of seeing and being seen. This can be at the expense of any wider use of the Internet.

The majority of children find ways of using the Internet privately, even when the computer is in the living room (less than 10% of children have PCs in their own bedroom). There is a lot of fun going on – like decorating their webpage walls, putting-up the latest pictures, their favourite Stars, emulating their heroes.

“Its nice when people say you’re pretty...it shows they care.” This is not necessarily a statement of naivety, or that the child is being conned. There is a sophistication to the process of public display on the Internet – trust, confidence, loyalty are all tested in ways similar to the most ancient of friendship games. Pranks and messing about are not all examples of bullying – close friends can go into each others printed profiles and mess them up for fun – as a game. Networks are caring enough for each other to play together on-line and “mess” with each others identities. Cyber-networks are the latest method of identity forming, testing and confirmation. We need to be able to distinguish social games from abuse.

“Its about growing-up – developing a conscious identity. The younger will describe themselves factually, the older will pick and chose, highlight and emphasise their chosen priorities for their public identity.”

Young people are able to discriminate between public and private in a way that is different for this generation than the ‘70’s generation. It’s sophisticated. Young people will only rarely offer deep, honest and intimate “truths” on-line – for that they’ll come back to the real world of one-to-one contact or the telephone.

This is a media-literate generation but they don’t manage the cyber-space perfectly. They’re in the process of learning the intricacies of “profiling” and at the same time learning the processes of forming an adult identity. Children and young people are very concerned about privacy from parents rather than strangers – just as previous generations fought for the privacy of their diaries or the no-go zones of their bedrooms.

Gender-based differences of behaviour are less obvious in *CyberWorld*, with boys “chatting” and flirting in a way they didn’t even ten years ago in face-to-face contact. Some images and pictures placed on the web are carefully constructed “plays” that may be “macho” or “feminine” as a stylised statement in front of more honest, personal commentary.

An on-line identity is becoming an asset - a signal of active citizenship. But there are new problems and dangers that previous generations didn’t experience when



confined to real-life social network building. At its simplest, a mistake, a prank, a silly act such as “mooning” from the top of the bus was once done and forgotten. There was no record or evidence. Now such acts are photographed on mobile phones or webcams and can

exist forever, shared anonymously and out of context, and used for power or put-down, with serious ramifications echoing through later life like a bad memory constantly renewed.

To understand *CyberWorld* and the Social Networking Sites in particular, we have to challenge the myths by looking through the eyes of young people to draw honest comparators between cyber and real-life relations and communication.

2.3. Young People Speaking: Peer Monitoring

To understand Internet use we should always link to real world comparators. A number of Youth Services across the country have established community peer monitoring groups as a self-help method of young people protecting each other from abuse on the Internet. In 2008, Plymouth University joined in collaboration with Plymouth Schools and the *South West Grid for Learning* to develop Peer Monitoring. Young people defend and promote the use of Social Networking Sites, and say they have the skills to keep each other safe:



For the uninitiated, the question is posed: is being on the Internet and having 100 or more friends, talking to ten of them at once, less sociable than sitting downstairs watching *Eastenders*?

Young people say they use the Internet for:

- **Communication** Genuinely seeking help
- **Information** Showcasing / promoting own talents
- **Entertainment** Discussion and debate
- **Gaming** Leagues, tournaments, social interaction
- **Escapism** Procrastination (not having to do homework)
- **Attention Seeking** Reinvent own life / create alternative identity

Young People's Positive Thoughts

"What is a cyber-friend? Is it the same as real friends? Are we using the term friend in a different way? A friend is someone you can relate to sometimes in some way – more people equal more possibilities – they're all friends of some sort...do we really ever know anyone?"

"With so many people on-line together, there's bound to be risky people, just like in any neighbourhood."

"On-line scams exist throughout the Internet."

"We have always been wanting to display our identities and show what we do and why we are..."

"I can see and think about what I'm trying to say..."

"As long as people recognise that these are real people, and that relating to them has real consequences, that's fine!"

"Personalities predisposed to traits and certain behaviours will be so via cyber-space just as much as real space."

Dangerous Actions Identified:

- 🗨️ **Invasion of privacy** – no guarantee of who you're talking to
- 🗨️ **Blur between advertising and information**
- 🗨️ **Inaccurate information** – no record from Chatrooms of what's said
- 🗨️ **Extreme views and pornography**
- 🗨️ **Webcam / Video** – pressurised into things not comfortable with
- 🗨️ **Unwanted contact**
- 🗨️ **Cyberbullying**
- 🗨️ **Paedophiles and Predators**
- 🗨️ **Gambling and purchases** – high costs
- 🗨️ **Addiction**

Collective Answers:

- 🗨️ **Peer-group monitoring** – set-up real groups to discuss web activities
- 🗨️ **Parent education** – understand the processes & culture of cyberspace
- 🗨️ **Social education** – discuss actions and consequences, public and private

Which strategy is right? Educate or Regulate?

Bullying is endemic in many parts of society, affecting people of all ages. Intervention is needed to develop positive behaviour, on and off-line. There is more that unites the two worlds than divides them, with most relationships on-line operating to the same norms and values as in the real world. *CyberWorld* offers intense personal contact, and as a consequence, more opportunities for abuse, with new methods towards old goals for those seeking to abuse children and young people.

Don't blame the Technology!



2.4. Keeping Children Safe On-Line: Stop Cyber-bullying! Childnet International

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology, (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

- Cyberbullying ruins children's lives
- 22% of young people in UK report being the target of cyberbullying
- Cyberbullying is different from other forms of bullying, because there is a lack of closure and possible 24/7 contact
- ICT offers a perception of anonymity - but it does leave a trail
- Bystanders bully too – “Laugh at it and you're part of it”
- Others don't necessarily see the effects – breeding a lack of empathy

Parents, teachers and children need to join together for on-line safety. The majority of parents over 30 do not understand or want to join in the use of internet Social Networking Sites or mobile phone text communication (especially the new text language). Schools have a lead and key role in helping parents to understand the new technology and ensure safe use.

Parents will just pull the plug if they hear it's too scary. But mobile phone use now involves 90% of the population. Children and young people consider a lack of a computer at home is a definition of poverty and social exclusion.

“Whatever you're born with is “normal”. Anything that gets invented after you're 30 is against the natural order of things and the end of civilisation as we know it...until it's been around for 10 years or so.”

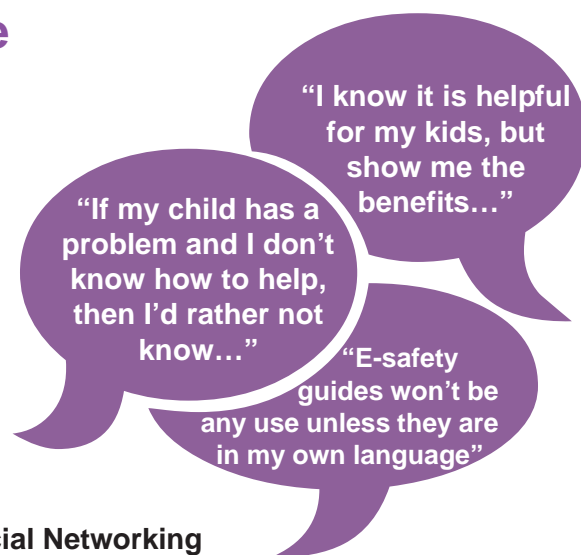
Douglas Adams



We have to understand the fears of parents:

How to reach parents:

- Better *Acceptable Use Policies*
- Parents Information Evenings
- Free use of school ICT with tutoring
- Leaflets, factsheets and newsletters
- Help students educate parents
- ICT clubs for parents / the community
- Family Agreement Generator
- Recognise the educational value of **Social Networking and associated services, don't dismiss them as "out of school issues" by blocking student use.**



It remains the case that behaviours and values in the real world should be the focus of our attention, in order to instruct and inform behaviours in Cyberspace.

“Our schools so far do a rather poor job of helping teens acquire the skills they need in order to participate within that information society. For starters, most adult jobs involve a high degree of collaboration, yet we still focus our schools on training autonomous learners. Rather than shutting kids off from social networking tools we should be teaching them how to exploit their potentials and mitigate their risks.”

Henry Jenkins, co-director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT
2005

2.5. “Safe On-Line” – The South West Grid for Learning

“Let's make sure we understand the risks and promote the positives: empower young people and parents – don't sensationalise!”

Sue Chapman, Cornwall Safeguarding Manager

The *South West Grid for Learning* (SWGfL) is one of 10 regional grids delivering Broad-band services to schools. SWGfL involves 15 local authorities including Plymouth, ensuring network filters through the Internet Watch Database, and rolling out awareness raising and training with the aim of reaching 1 million staff and parents across the South West.

Examples of projects include:

- Workshops to the Extended Schools Network
- Mechanisms for easy reporting of concerns
- How to identify signs of addiction
- “Buying a mobile for your child”
- “Understanding social networking sites”
- How to educate your child on Internet use
- PC maintenance

www.swgfl.org.uk

In Plymouth, the *iPlymouth* scheme in primary schools use *Facebook* style social networking tools to encourage children to record targets and achievements as a new platform for Individualised Learning Plans.

Cyberworld is a variation on ancient themes, not a totally different universe.

The numbers hurt through Social Networking Sites are very small and mainly the most vulnerable and socially excluded children.

An analogy for current concerns about Cyberworld is the invention of the motor car: at first a man with a red flag walked in front. Now cars are a way of life but child deaths and accidents do still happen and young people do steal cars and have accidents.

There are real issues: Facebook was originally designed by a clever undergraduate to maintain his social group at college. That is, it was designed for adult use, not by children. Site managers could screen and monitor the sites, but often they don't. As a result, sometimes the effect is similar to allowing a 12 year old unaccompanied into an 18 certificate film.

A significant difference that can be both a danger and a safeguard is that all imagery on Social Networking Sites is permanent – the photos are stored and can be retrieved, forever. There needs to be care and caution over what children and young people offer of themselves on-line. They can be bullied over a prolonged period, and at the same time the bully can usually be tracked and the evidence obtained that can prove them guilty of offences that will have long term ramifications.

David Wright and **Karl Hopwood** have reported to **SWGfL*** on the images of child sexual abuse on the Internet:

- There has been a sharp increase in the number of commercial sites showing child sexual abuse in the last three years, leading to the majority of child sexual abuse imagery a money-making concern.
- The age of victims shown being abused is getting younger
- Images of child sexual abuse are getting more severe, with 47% of websites depicting images in the most severe categories.
- 49% of 8-17 year olds have a social networking profile (27% of 8-11 year olds and 63% of 16-1 year olds)
- 2.6% of schools experienced staff accessing illegal material
- 81.8% of secondary schools experienced issues on social networking sites
- 60% of schools reporting issues say they relate to Cyber Bullying

Agencies should not take cyber-bullying lightly. For effective safeguarding, the bullying continuum must be recognised - when does bullying become child abuse? When the effects are damaging to the point of potential significant harm. In particular, the long-term effects of abusive images and behaviours must be taken into account when assessing severity, and agencies should be prepared to enact Child Protection Procedures where abuse is suspected.

“To ignore e-safety issues when implementing the Every Child Matters agenda would be a major oversight and would ultimately lead to significant gaps in child protection policies, leaving children and young people vulnerable.”

Every Child Matters,
Programme for Change

* The South West Grid for Learning provides ISP safety and security services and is accredited by Becta, working closely with the regional police forces and child protection agencies. SWGfL provides reactive support for schools with e-safety issues and situations and organises e-safety conferences for teachers and child protection agencies. SWGfL also delivers e-safety sessions for parents, with the aim of at least one session per year in every Plymouth school. SWGfL is able to work alongside Local Safeguarding Children Boards to support the delivery of e-safety related messages and programmes to staff, pupils and communities.



2.6. CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection

CEOP is the police agency for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation using the Internet.

The organisation works towards harm reduction, intelligence gathering and operations to catch perpetrators.

www.ceop.gov.uk

Helen Penn, the Head of Education at the Police *Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre* (CEOP), has identified two Scentral concerns for cyber-safety:

- **Grooming by adults**
- **Children creating profiles that are easily traceable into the real world**

“Children are exploring their sexuality using the Internet in a way they wouldn’t have before”, requiring a reappraisal of traditional thinking and even recent social rules. “Never arrange a meeting on-line” is no longer resonating in a world where tens of millions of people are using the Internet to form relationships.”

The effects of a deepening contemporary Generation Gap created by new technology is the common experience from all agencies, placing adults and particularly parents at the heart of a “catch-up” approach to understanding the priorities, social morals and ICT based skills of today’s children.



Research has placed the experience of Cyber-bullying at the centre of current child protection and safeguarding issues, requiring local authorities to have strategies clearly identified in Children & Young People Plans for the coming years. But Cyberworld also raises wider questions about the experience of modern childhood and the changing norms, behaviours and values of the modern child.

Children are exploring their sexuality using the Internet in a way they wouldn’t have before this new medium. Predatory adults scan Internet sites to find children and young people for sex or abusive images, sometimes offering remuneration.

The Internet can be very confusing for young people in a period of exploration and identity development. The most popular new sites offer an alternative identity of your choice, falsely suggesting complete anonymity which can lead to a general perception of anonymity on the Internet and inappropriate disclosures and displays.

For example, there are now over 6 million people signed-up to **Second Life**, and the more specific **Teen Second Life**, a link between the real world and Cyberworld. Here you can create your complex alter-ego, called an Avatar, enjoy sexualised relationships, and buy, own and sell using real money paying for Cyberworld artefacts on-line and have them delivered to your real-world home door.

Young people have designed their own *Addidas* footwear decorations on-line and had the real thing delivered to them at home. Young adults are spending £500 on a virtual apartment in London’s Mayfair and living there on-line for a while before seeking to sell it on at a profit, the cash being paid to them via the Internet in real currency.



In 2008, the first person was successfully convicted for stealing furniture from an Apartment in *Second Life* - the furniture was virtual-designed and paid for in Lindens, *Second Life*'s currency exchangeable with US dollars. Taking the furniture to another apartment in Cyberspace constituted theft in the real world.

In Germany, a network of virtual buildings on *Second Life* were closed down by Police after childlike Avatars were created and adults invited to sexually abuse them in virtual backrooms.

secondlife.com
clubpenguin.com
bebo.com
earth.google.com

Such virtual-real interfaces are very confusing for young people.

The website www.preteenchat.com is increasingly seeing 7-9 year olds exploring their sexuality younger, and finding it exciting, empowering and extremely dangerous, emulating their older siblings in both the virtual and the real world. But there is no direct comparison between childhood sexuality and post-puberty sexuality, including the physical, hormonal, emotional and psychological maturity required to understand and manage human sexual relations. Prepubescent children find it hard to understand and can face trauma and extreme risk when faced with adult sexual behaviours. Similarly, young teens are pushed onto older networking sites like *Facebook* to get away from the pre-teen culture, driving them into earlier adult behaviours, without the knowledge or emotional preparation. For effective child protection, age-appropriate sex education must now be considered essential and from an earlier age than currently offered.



Club Penguin is a Social Networking Site for under 10's, with an open chat area and host of games and puzzles where they can "earn" coins, and have been found prepared to do an awful lot of things to earn them.

Children and young people will offer a lot of information, now known as the "Sandwich Board Theory" – walking up and down the virtual world showing their name, age, details, hobbies and pictures.

And everything leaves an everlasting digital footprint.

Personal profiles: SNSs like **Bebo** allow everyone to create their Personal Profile: Date of Birth; Photo(s); School; description of looks; relationship with siblings and friends; links to siblings and friends profiles; links to school sites and other facilities they use in the real-world community. **Bebo** has safety features, including identification of the user's IP Address signifying a level of monitoring and traceability.

The predator can use this information and other facilities such as **Google Earth** to locate the general area, school and then home of the child, find their friends, look up details of parents, their work and jobs and identify when they're likely to be out of the house when children are likely to be at home.

Once information is placed on-line you can be easily traced, the information is hard to remove and can be copied or cached, and lead the way to others you link with who can become victims even if you do not.



2.7. The Industry Leads – Vodaphone, Bebo and O2

The guidelines published by the UK Government in 2008 linked together Industry, Health, Education, Children’s Social Care and law enforcement to establish tough standards for Safety on the Internet:

- **All Profiles for under 18’s are automatically to be “private”.** The problem of the ability to input false information, such as age / date of birth, as part of the culture of supposed anonymity, maintains the challenge of protecting children from identification and tracking. *Bebo* has acted to ensure all profile are private, and warns external enquirers that the identification ISP Address of their computer has been logged. This could and should be standard.
- **Full advice pages on registration:** the issue of accessibility is crucial here, with many sites already offering pages of advice, but close-typed, unattractive and boring. Will advice be read, or taken?
- **Messages and Tools for teachers to combat bullying** (Europe-wide standard protocols): schools are important to learning safety, but parental knowledge and understanding is key to effective monitoring and protection.
- **Certification of teachers on how to raise awareness** of dangers of social networking: allows standard message and accountability, but there are current “schools of thought” that maintain contradictory messages, and certification is currently voluntary.
- **Mobile Phones:** use for significant bullying or sexualised images is now a criminal offence, with Industry working with *CEOP* to track infringements, but with more than one mobile per person in UK, awareness raising of risks and consequences will be more effective than fear of punishment.
- **Age Verification software:** background filters to verify identity and age of people at sign-up are being developed for Web 3, the next generation of the Internet, effectively combating the creation of false identities.

Safety over Commercialism

Google, the transnational search engine and internet communication vehicle, has launched Android Software as a safety programme that can identify child sexual abuse on websites, record the details, notify authorities and send a legal official warning to those identified.

Computer IP Addresses can be traced, meaning there is no anonymity on the Internet. The Police have been working with Google on safety over commercial issues. Indexing of information on Social Networking Sites has been allowed by the ease of search and find open information collected without trace. Creating caches of linked information creates real dangers. Web-designers are able to prevent the indexing of information but have refused to do so, as the provision caches attracts more customers than the competition. Now, a red flag system is being introduced to identify users who link together information to trace individuals.

Not all products display such scruples. *Piczo, Inc* is a privately held blog company based in San Francisco, California. Piczo sees around 12 million unique visitors a month. offering an online photo website builder and community, which is for the generation of free advertising-supported websites. It is a multi-million dollar business Piczo, launched in 2004, allows users to add images, text, guestbooks, message boxes, videos, and other content to their site using plain text and HTML, effectively offering them a personal website to create and share, display pictures and profiles. Age and date of birth cannot be checked, and the site effectively entices younger children to pretend to be older and engage in post-pubescent activities and discussion.

2.8. Internet and mobile Phones:

Integrated Open Information Worldwide – The Japanese experience

The race is on for Social Networking Sites to incorporate Instant Messaging Services, Chatrooms, Blogs and Webpages as part of the fierce commercial competition to keep the customer from moving between different services.

All the time, ICT is becoming more integrated and accessible. We are at the start of a further leap into a new technological revolution that will see interactivity between machines become part of day-to-day social organisation. The next generation of mobile phones, together with the next generation of the Internet and associated technologies (including the doubling of capacity of the size and speed of information transfer via *WiFi*) will further change social interactions and transactions. An early example is the *WiFi* fridge that automatically identifies when staple food items are due to run out, and sends an order to Tesco for a timely delivery, without human action.



Japan is leading the way. Children are using the Internet via their mobile phones in preference to PCs. This trend is now moving fast-forward in the UK, where internet phone access has seen the highest charges in the world - £7 per MB. New regulations are forcing mobile phone prices for web access down, allowing significant increase in use. The development of 3-D graphics, improved video-compression, increased band-width (Broadband allows for much more information to transfer at once) and sophisticated encryption (allowing control of private coded data that has to be deciphered by the correct encryption programme in order to be opened and viewed), allows for ever more detailed and abundant images to be shared and stored.

Known as 3G technology, the increase in speed for accessing internet pages and transferring and downloading data has been phenomenal. In Japan, 83% of high school students own a mobile phone and approximately one in five report using dating sites (Yasumasa Kioka, 2003) where children “post-up” “advertisements” for a date on message board web sites, usually by using their mobile phones. This can leave them exposed to abuse.

The largest UK Internet provider, **Virgin Mobile**, says Web 3 will allow for more restrictions on Internet use, but the increase in advertising space and media sharing will make surveillance and enforcement of copyright laws much more difficult. Indeed, they predict new international legislation to encourage open models of information sharing on-line.

In the UK, 1 in 3 children under 11 years of age owned a mobile phone in 2002, with 5 out of 7 texting regularly, and 1 in 5 sending messages to mobile phones using the Internet. By 2010 the integration of phones, cameras and computer technologies via the internet will be complete, with a new generation of **WiFi** and **Bluetooth** technologies ensuring almost unlimited access to information, communication and a wide range of interactive facilities. The **Apple iPhone** is a current leader in this field but competition is fierce and the new generation of web-based 3G video phone technology is now in Britain, offering chat, video calling and MMS (texts that can include self made sounds and pictures).

In South Korea, 4G technology is being tested, taking mobile communication and networking to yet a higher level of capability. The taking of photographs and video footage of people without them knowing, and sharing it with wider networks and Internet sites across the world within minutes is an opportunity available to all. The dangers to children are clear.

One in two Japanese girls and one in four boys have admitted attending face-to-face meetings following “dating postings” on the Internet. In the four years since the introduction of next generation Internet, the Japanese National Police Agency have reported a five-fold increase in child prostitution as a direct result of internet messaging boards, and an overall increase in crimes using a mobile phone.



2.9. NCH UK Technology Survey 2006: Mapping the Knowledge Gap

The knowledge gap means many parents are unable to provide realistic advice and support to children who are too young to know how to protect themselves from the risks associated with new technologies.

The **NCH Get I.T. Safe Survey** in 2006 found:

- 1% of parents think their children are blogging
- 33% of children use blogs
- 67% of parents don't know what a blog is
- 13% of 11 year olds are never supervised on-line
- 11% of 11 year olds say parents know nothing about their on-line communication
- 65% of parents know how to deny access to specific websites
- 46% of children can get round parental blocks
- 79% of children use Internet Messaging
- 29% of parents know what Internet Messaging is
- 7 out of 10 parents say they no less about mobile phones than their children
- 43% of parents don't know what WAP is, and more than 50% don't know what 3G is.

NCH has offered four categories of hazards for children:

- **Content** Issues: exposure to material that is not age appropriate or is upsetting or potentially damaging
- **Contact** issues: inappropriate contact towards relationships with a child or young person.
- **Commerce** Issues: unscrupulous companies targeting children and young people with worthless goods and services, scams, or for details of household income levels and expenditure patterns.
- **Cultural** Issues: what behaviours and self-imagery are becoming the norm for children and young people, for example the commodification of sex.

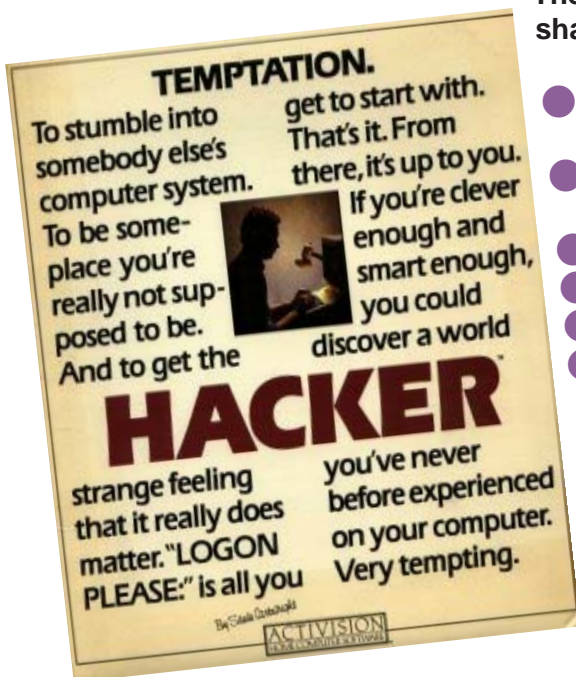
Charlotte Aynsley of **Becta** reports that contact offences are the least of all levels of abuse on the internet, with racist and homophobic abuse and, in particular, sites and extreme postings inciting racial hatred being far more common and causing particular offence and damage.

David Wright of **SWGfL** offers case study evidence of the difference between what parents think their children are doing and what is actually taking place, with hand-held games consoles such as PSPs able to be wired to access the Web using WiFi from neighbouring houses. In one case, a 12 year old boy had wound wire to the outside of a *Pringles* tube to amplify the microwave transmissions from three houses away to produce a signal strong enough to use.

The NCH family guide encourages parental involvement.

2.10. The Multi-Agency Response: Towards Positive Use

Kent County Council and Kent Police, together with agencies linked through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, have led the way in developing strategies to keep children safe.



The Multi-Agency approach has been informed by a shared understanding that:

- Children are innovative, fearless, impatient and imperfect!
- The issues are not technical, but educational, social and psychological.
- Children embrace the technology very easily.
- We must raise awareness, not frighten people
- We must not criminalise children if at all possible
- Cyber bullying, scams and abuse affect people of all ages, not just children

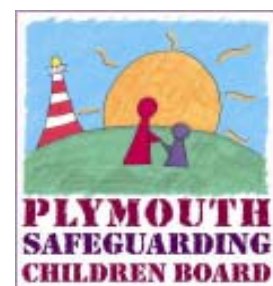
Safety on-line is difficult to ensure because society has responded slowly to ethical and social issues. This is incredibly powerful technology, and the law has lagged behind the developments. Technical solutions have been over sold and over relied upon. As a result, criminals have exploited loopholes relentlessly, and on an international scale.

Kent has developed a preventive strategy. As the local authority with the largest number of schools (213,000 children in 596 schools), communicating e-safety has not been straightforward. A multi-agency strategy group has been long established, with the *Kent Safeguarding Children Board* ensuring links between the Children's Trust and ICT service providers at Corporate and local school levels, among many. They have developed on-line e-safety materials that are free for use by everyone.

www.Clusterweb.org.uk/safety

The Schools Self Audit offers a benchmark for all agencies:

- Has the agency an e-Safety Policy
- Has e-safety training been provided for both children and staff?
- Do all staff sign an ICT Code of Conduct on appointment?
- Do users agree to comply with the agency's e-Safety Rules?
- Have agency e-Safety Rules been explained to children?
- Has the practical implementation of the agency policy been approved by the Senior Management Team (SMT)?
- Are staff with responsibility adequately supervised by SMT?
- Have appropriate staff attended training on the e-safety systems?
- Do the agency's policies recognise Child Abuse as part of the continuum of bullying behaviours?



The **Education & Inspections Act 2006** has offered headteachers and school staff greater powers, including confiscation and disposal of mobile phones and other equipment where there is reasonable suspicion of cyber-bullying or abuse. But the prior establishment of a full Policy detailing sanctions, fully explained and circulated to all parents and children is a pre-requisite to using the sanctions. Consultation and parental involvement is once again essential.

Becta has made clear that the issues of cyber-safety span more than bullying alone and are directly related to child abuse using the Internet and mobile phones. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should take the lead role in co-ordinating multi-agency action for Cyber Safety.

3. Key Messages from Research

3.1. Working Together to prevent Child Sexual Abuse on the Internet

“The Internet has now become a significant tool in the distribution of child pornography (sic). Adults are now using the Internet to try to establish contact with children with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. As part of their role in preventing abuse and neglect, ACPCs4 may wish to consider activities to raise awareness about the safe use of the Internet by children, by, for example, distributing information through education staff to parents, in relation to both school and home-based use of computers with children.

When somebody is discovered to have placed child pornography on the Internet, or accessed child pornography, the police should normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of children. In particular, the individual's access to children should be established, within the family and employment contexts and in other settings (e.g. work with children as a volunteer). If there are particular concerns about one or more specific children, there may be a need to carry out s.47 enquiries in respect of those children.”

Working Together 1999

In the ten years since concerns about child sexual abuse on the Internet were first documented by the UK Government, understanding and response by social welfare agencies has been slow. When considering the readiness and ability of designated professionals to assess the risk of significant harm to a child coming from Internet and mobile phone use by the child, members of her or his family, or others, we need to ensure useful and accurate theory and knowledge is accessible to busy frontline practitioners.

Each agency must review the extent to which up-to-date knowledge, not only of internet and mobile communications technology but also profiles of criminals convicted of Internet related sexual crimes, and the nature and types of material generated and transferred.

Whilst research and a related body of knowledge is developing, offering a new and emerging practice wisdom that challenges many existing paradigms, little discussion or formal training is taking place within the safeguarding and child protection services. This must be corrected as a matter of urgency.

3.2. Cyber-Bullying

According to Ofsted (2008) 4 in 10 children in England have experienced Cyberbullying. Children admit some experience as a victim of bullying, through mobile phones, e-mails and chat-rooms, and unpleasant things being posted about them on websites.

Bullying is a bigger issue now than it used to be, with children without friends around them being more at risk of being bullied. The Internet can provide a single and private arena in which people are more susceptible to individual bullying. Contrary to popular belief, mobile and e-mail messages are instant and hard to trace, and the anonymity through nicknames means identification of the cyberbully can be more difficult than in the real world.



Cyber bullying behaviours include people

- sending threatening text messages
- making threatening mobile phone calls
- posting unpleasant things about a child or young person on social websites
- taking embarrassing or unpleasant pictures and circulating them electronically
- embarrassing video clips, including showing people being hit or threatened, put on the Internet for all to see
- Purposefully infecting a persons computer with a virus via e-mails or on-line games accounts
- Stealing personal identification details and using them to bully someone else
- Discriminatory statements concerning gender, sexual preference, size, disability, skin colour and religion



Race Hate site on You Tube

It is important to recognise the span of bullying along a continuum from softer, time-limited bullying that is upsetting but can be countered, along a broad spectrum towards hard bullying over a continued and protracted period of time that causes severe distress the potential for significant harm to a child's development, self-esteem, social inclusion and health.

Such bullying is properly understood as child abuse as defined by the Children Act 2004, and must in all contexts be treated as such by all agencies concerned for promoting the welfare of children. The advent of Cyberworld creates an enormous range of new responsibilities for child welfare, and redefines contemporary and traditional definitions and understandings of bullying.

3.3. Health & Safety in Cyberworld

The risks directly associated with emotional and sexual harm through the Internet are thankfully under close scrutiny. The physical risks associated with the technology are less focused upon, but new research is requiring a more robust consideration of the health and safety hazards associated with computer and mobile phone use.

"I think we are on a threshold of what could be a global disaster...This is the first generation of children who have used computers from early childhood while their bones and muscles are developing."

Dr Leon Straker,
Professor of Physiotherapy
at Curtin University,
Perth, Australia

The Byron Report identified health and child development concerns about excessive use of computers and mobile phones, and specifically the health impacts of playing video games, ranging from sleep-loss, repetitive strain injury (RSI) to lack of exercise contributing to obesity. Prolonged computer use is putting children at risk of permanent injury according to health experts.

The BBC's Christine Stewart is reporting that thousands of children are already damaged by medical problems associated with the use of computers. These problems - neck, back, headaches and RSI - have long been recognised in adults.

Dr Leon Straker, who is researching the problem in Australia, believes the future is bleak for UK children unless action is taken quickly: "If we don't get knowledge quickly about how to use computers safely, then I think we will see a lot of children disabled from using computers."

As yet, no significant research into the risks of RSI among children who spend time on computers doing homework or playing games, has been carried out in the UK. But doctors are reporting an increasing number of children complaining of computer-related injuries, according to the BBC.

Microwave Transmissions

Even more contentious is the effect of prolonged microwave activity from mobile phones on the developing brain. Less considered still is the prolonged effect of similar microwave transmissions emanating from WiFi technologies. Wireless interconnectivity via Bluetooth, WiFi etc, are set to experience a further significant upgrade in the next few years, doubling exposure to radiowave pollution.

There are over 55 million different Wi-Fi enabled devices in Europe, with one in four UK adults already owning a Wi-Fi enabled laptop. 80 per cent of secondary schools in England have installed wireless technology in their buildings, and Local Authorities are progressing “Mu-Fi” – where entire municipalities receive Wi-Fi coverage – with Norwich applauded as the UK’s first Wi-Fi town in 2007.

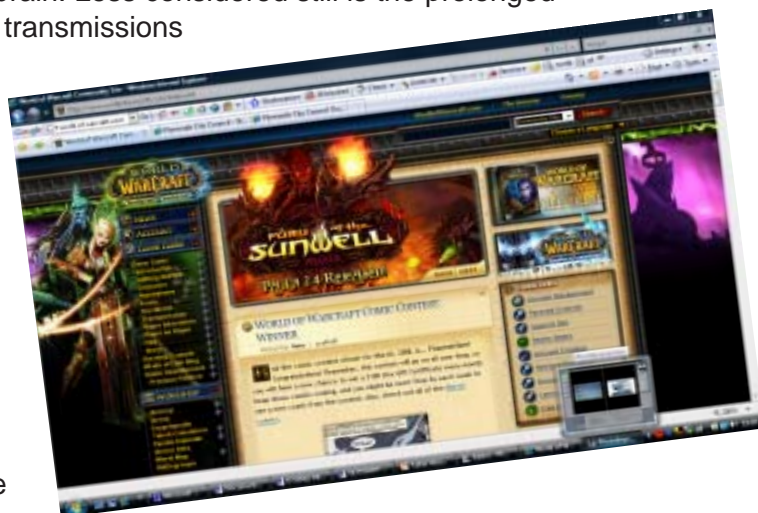
Wi-Fi uses an unlicensed part of the radio spectrum (2.4. gigahertz) and is sold and used without any health and safety checks (except technical interference and compatibility requirements), or trials.



Denis Henshaw, Professor of Physics at the University of Bristol, says, “If you are a drug company marketing a new drug you have to go through years of testing to prove your product is safe.” He finds the lack of testing of Wi-Fi “remarkable”.

Breakthroughs in neuro-science has given fresh insight into the workings of the brain and early brain development in children. By 10, children have 90% of the neural pathways of an adult fully in place. There are many different theories on how electromagnetic radiation interacts with children’s bodies, but pulsed microwave radiation, such as that used by Wi-Fi and mobile phones, is thought to affect the body’s cells in a unique way.

According to the ECOLOG-Institut, exposure to the oscillating microwaves used in Wi-Fi damages the immune and central nervous systems. They recommend an exposure limit 1,000 times lower than current guidelines.



The game of Warcraft has 100,000 people playing on-line together at any one time.

The ECOLOG-Institut has found that the slow rate of oscillation of carrier pulses conveying texts and e-mails interact with protein vibrational receptors (like microscopic hairs) on the membranes of cells, which interpret the unusual stimulation as a foreign invader and close down, impairing the flow of nutrients into the cell or waste materials on the way out. The process also interrupts inter-cellular communication, meaning that clusters of cells that form tissues can no longer work as effectively together. This has specific and worrying implications for child development.

More significant research has offered an array of detailed evidence of ill-health linked to exposure to mobile telephone transmission masts, suggesting transferable outcomes for home-based Wi-Fi transmitters. There is an increase in tumours seen in animals and people exposed to frequent doses of microwave radiation.

In 2008, Internet capacity in the UK reached breaking point, and the UK regulator, Ofcom, announced the release of the 2.5 Ghz frequency, allowing the development of WiMAX, a Wi-Fi system operating at double the strength of the current generation.

In May 2007, BBC's Panorama programme found the radiation emitted half a metre from a Wi-Fi laptop was at least as high, if not higher, than the intensity of microwaves measured 150 metres away from a mobile phone mast. The findings were challenged by the IT industry and also denied by the UK Government. Further research is underway.

The German Government is advising its citizens to limit their exposure to Wi-Fi systems wherever possible and to use wired alternatives. The local government in Salzburg, Austria, has set legally binding limits for radiation from masts that is thousands of times below the current international guidelines. The Swedish government officially recognises electrosensitivity as a medical problem. The Australian government has rejected the international guidelines on microwave exposure as inadequate.

Electromagnetic hyper-sensitivity is now a growing cause of concern. In the same way as some people have allergies, so there is increasing evidence of hypersensitivity to electro-magnetic radiation and microwaves. The Dutch Government has issued explicit warnings and funded research. A small percentage of extensive computer users develop hypersensitivity towards electric and electro-magnetic fields emitted by PC and TV screens and other electronic equipment in the home and office. Symptoms vary in range from itching, dizziness and headache to skin rashes and intense fatigue. Social isolation is often the effect.

The issue of child health and safety in relation to Wi-Fi and mobile phone technology is set to become a major topic for safeguarding children in the coming years.

3.4. Sexual Offending, Offenders and the Internet – Martin C. Calder

The Internet is a phenomenal educational tool, with use encouraged in schools to:

- Develop the Global Library
- Break down national and international barriers
- Develop and maintain relationships
- Self-disclose and take inter-personal risks (open-up)
- Combat Oppression: Network, support and advocate
- Develop support groups
- Deliver counselling, disease control and prevention services
- Promote global understanding

Sex is a frequently researched topic on the Internet. Type in the word sex pictures to a search engine (e.g Google) and a list will appear of over 2 million websites that contain the words and often the pictures - there is no block to such material for children and young people unless blocking software has been applied. It is estimated that there are more than 14 million pornographic websites in active operation on the Internet at any one time (Costello, 2001).

Computers can act as an aid for those who are sexually interested in children and allow for the production, viewing, storage and distribution of images of child sexual abuse. Internet sexual abuse represents a small but growing part of sexual abuse against children. In 2004, there were an estimated one million images of children being sexually abused on the Internet, many featuring children from Third World countries being abused by affluent sex tourists from the West. At least 200 new images are posted each day.



You Tube holds millions of home made videos and photos. A barrier warning screen is displayed preventing viewing of sexual image unless you declare your age as over 18

One in five children under 17 years admit to having visited pornographic websites. By 2000, research by Finkelhor et al found that 19% of young people who used the Internet reported being approached for sex at least once a year while using the Internet. One in seven of those reported that the offender attempted to contact them through phone or postal mail.

An offender interested in sex with a child may wait in Internet chat rooms, gathering information until an opportunity arises arrange a real life meeting. In 2002, one-in-five 9-16 year olds used chat rooms and one-in-ten chat room users have met in person someone they communicated with first on-line. A third did not know where to report unpleasant experiences and would not have told parents.

The Changing Paradigm

Pornography has been considered to play an important part in contributing to sexual violence (Itzin, 1992). The Internet can be seen to exaggerate this, providing a unique distribution medium that works on at least three levels simultaneously:

- anonymous, immediate and constant supply of illegal images of child sexual abuse
- The creation and maintenance of a sense of deviant behaviour, legitimising underground social organisation, activities and a form of currency
- Reinforcement of the justification of child sexual abuse through portrayals of abuse where children are smiling or have neutral expressions suggesting willing sexual behaviour (O'Connell 2001)

Paedophiles have instant access to other predators worldwide, able to openly discuss sexual desires and share methods for luring children. This includes access to child victims worldwide, ready access to teen chatrooms presenting oneself as a teenager, and grooming potential victims long-term towards physical contact in the real world.

Internet Sex Offenders have been categorised as:

- **Recreational users: accessing out of curiosity or for entertainment and not typically seen as having problems associated with on-line sexual behaviour**
- **Sexual compulsive users: using the Internet as a vehicle for pathological sexual expression and sexual activities**
- **At-risk users: who, if it were not for the availability of the Internet may never have developed a problem with their sexuality.** (Cooper et al 1999)

The Internet allows for highly disinhibited sexual behaviour, different from ordinary behaviour in the real world, likened to “wearing a mask” (Diabet, 1998). There are stages that people move through in their offending behaviour linked to engagement with the Internet.

Cyber-sex abusers have been characterised as:

All:

- Heavy users of the Internet
- Generally married
- Frequently educated professionals
- Survivors of sexual abuse
- Depressed

Male Abusers:

- Middle aged (usually older than women cyber-sex abusers)
- More likely to be chemically dependent
- More likely to be involved in compulsive sexual behaviour or labelled a “sex-addict”

Female Abusers:

- More likely to present Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders
 - Generally involved in compulsive over-eating/bulimia
 - Similar to male cyber-sex abusers in terms of interest in paraphilias, romance/dating and swinging
- (Schwartz and Southern, 2000)

The Chief Executive of Childnet International, Stephen Carrick-Davies, is clear: “We live in a sexually toxic society.”

There is a recognised process of escalation, identified as:

- **Pre-reflection** of own history of early sexualised behaviour, inadequate adult socialisation and dissatisfaction with current persona
- **Initial contact** with the Internet: often accompanied by accessing adult pornography sites before a search for child pornography
- **Normalising:** Engaging with a virtual community, thus normalising collection of material and learned linked behaviours
- **Increase in fantasy** and sexual behaviour, lowering sexual inhibitions. The illegality of material can heighten sexual arousal.
- **Real change in offender’s beliefs**, values and cognitive styles, for example, many perpetrators may have been abused and seek to repeat their abusive experience with them in control for a change
- **Seeking-out children**, by using chatrooms for sexual conversations leading to telephone contact with the hope of engagement. (Blundell et al 2002)
- **Grooming:** The attempt to befriend a child towards acquiescence to abusive activity (Wyre, 2000)
- **Tutoring:** instructing children in the best ways of destroying or hiding the evidence of files transferred, and establishing untraceable sub-accounts for the victim (Zwicke, 2000).

The Growth in Abuse through the Internet

Whilst more research is required and ongoing, the causal links between accessing Internet images of child sexual abuse and transferring sexual fantasy to action in the real world are becoming clear. Blundell et al (2002) found that the longer the fantasy is maintained and elaborated upon, the greater the chances that the behaviour will be acted out in real life.

More research is required on the desensitising and de-humanising effects of prolonged and repetitive access to abusive imagery, language and behaviours. In war, for example, such dehumanisation can lead to a changed paradigm of the spectrum of socially acceptable human behaviours.

Successive research has found that the actual experiences of deviant sex are more likely to influence future behaviour than fantasies about the acts. This raises a question about the nature of the Internet. How far will the significantly more “Real” fantasy world of the Internet influence the future behaviours of adults and the “inquisitive child” whose first sexual explorations are within the boundary-less virtual world of the Internet?



The Child

Finkelhor et al (2000) found that 25% of children reporting having been solicited for sexual purposes described being “extremely afraid or upset”, with children 10-13 years reporting the greatest adverse impact. Adolescents, more than children, are at greater risk of “seduction” from predators (Mitchell et al, 2001).

Children who are sexually abused through the Internet are doubly abused: once when they are actually abused and again when this abuse can be seen by thousands (and potentially millions) of people forever on screen. This continual accessibility via the Internet makes treatment and recovery more difficult, and can be used as blackmail for secrecy and continued or repeated abuse.

Sexual offenders often target children with particular characteristics, including:

- Looked After Children in the care of the State
- Children who have experienced prior abuse
- Emotionally immature children
- Children with learning disabilities or physical disabilities
- Socially excluded children
- Children isolated within their families, including financially secure or well-off families
- Children at a loose end on the street
- Love or attention deprived children
- Children with strong respect for adult status
- Children from single-parent families (largely where there is multiple partner access)
- Children who will co-operate for a desired award (such as money, computer games, etc)
- Children who have previously abused and are displaying learned (sexualised) behaviour which a paedophile will spot
- Children with low self-esteem (adapted from Stanley, 2001)

We are just beginning to understand the problems for children and young people who have suffered through the Internet or have abused the Internet for their own sexual purposes.

Risks include:

- Exposure to incorrect information about human sexual behaviour
- Exposure to age-inappropriate sexual materials
- The potential to develop sexually compulsive behaviour
- The potential to develop sexual addiction
- The potential to use Internet materials of a sexual nature to enhance deviant (inappropriate) sexual fantasies
- The potential to abuse others (Robert E Longo, 2004)



CEOP has developed a depth of knowledge and strategies to keep children and young people safe in Cyberworld, with a constantly updated resource for children, parents and practitioners alike, at www.thinkuknow.co.uk

David Finkelhor et al (2008) have reframed our understanding:

- 1 in 25 young people receive at least one online sexual solicitation for real-world contact
- Internet offenders manipulate young people into criminal sexual relationships by appealing to young people's desire to be appreciated, understood, take risks and find out about sex
- Almost all victims go voluntarily to meet and have sex with Internet offenders, but these are nonetheless sex crimes that take advantage of inexperienced and vulnerable young people
- Internet offenders target teens who are willing to talk on-line about sex

and has set some guides:

- be very careful about who you give personal information to and what kinds of things you share (its no use, and can be counter productive to say "never give out personal information on-line – everybody does it).
- Be very careful what you do with social networking sites or personal web pages (its pointless saying don't have a social networking site – its like grounding someone for no reason)
- Boys can be criminally victimised too (a quarter of victims on-line are boys)
- Using the Internet or mobile phone to send sexual pictures of yourself or friends can get you in serious trouble with the Law
- Don't let friends influence your better judgement when on-line together

www.thinkuknow.co.uk



4. Conclusions

4.1. Cyber abuse is a priority issue for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

4.2. All images of children in sexualised conditions on the Internet and mobile phone technologies represent an actual event of abuse that is harmful and hurtful to the child, and should not be referred to as pornography which may or may not be consensual and based upon informed choice.

4.3. Cyber abuse is different from other forms of child sexual abuse, with different processes, behaviours, power-base and effects.

4.4. Whilst the majority of child sexual abuse takes place inside the child's extend family, Cyber-abuse is ascribed inside the traditional definition of "stranger abuse" and is on the increase, to a point where it may be overtaking and redefining statistics on the extent of child sexual abuse.

4.5. The Internet and wider Cyber-world is changing values and morals associated with sexual activity and sexuality that are complex and contradictory, and is challenging traditional definitions of sexual behaviours and relationships. Definitions of unacceptable behaviour, based upon the body of evidence of what causes significant harm, particularly to children, should be considered, shared and discussed by practitioners, agreed and adhered to.

4.6. Cyber-abuse is a new and additional risk. The potential for children to be vulnerable to greater levels of abuse is associated with on-line activity.

4.7. Children more vulnerable to Cyber-abuse are largely from within the same categories of vulnerability as those vulnerable to other forms of child abuse.

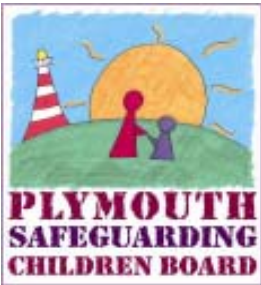
4.8. Cyber abuse includes bullying but includes activities that are different from bullying, requiring recognition of different processes, behaviours and effects upon children and young people.

4.9. The development of the cyber-offender represents a development of the traditional model of child abuser or paedophile. Easier accessibility to images of child sexual abuse, and to real children, via the Internet can procure abusers who may otherwise not have become active. The outcome is the same.

4.10. Further research must be undertaken, including into the effects of sex on the Internet on the thinking, emotions, behaviours and functioning of children and young people, and the links between cyber-abuse and other arenas of child abuse including Domestic Abuse, Hidden Harm, and mental health issues in families.

4.11. Up-to-date knowledge of the e-safety issues and processes should be ensured across all children's agencies and lead practitioners, as well as parents, with the use of policy initiatives, learning events, formal training and regularly up-dated on-line information dissemination.

"It's not primarily having a social networking profile or giving out personal information that puts kids at risk. What puts kids at risk are things like having a lot of conflict with your parents, being depressed and socially isolated, being hyper, communicating with a lot of people online who you don't know, being willing to talk about sex online with people that you don't know." - David Finkelhor



CYBERWORLD GLOSSARY

Address The location of a web site. Sometimes it is used as shorthand for a person's e-mail address. Sometimes referred to as an URL - Uniform Resource Locator.

Anti-virus software A computer program which checks a computer for any viruses. A file that arrives with an e-mail. Normally you will know if an e-mail has an attachment because a little paperclip icon will appear with the message.

Applications Pieces of software usually created by third party developers that interact with the core features of a social networking site. Examples include mini-games, film trivia quizzes and online travel maps.

Attachment Attachments coming from strangers or sources you do not know should be treated with caution: they might contain viruses that could badly damage your computer.

Avatar An avatar is a persona in a virtual world, such as Second Life or World of Warcraft. The user chooses all characteristics about how they wish to look, their personality traits and basic skills. An avatar can be two or three-dimensional.

Back button The arrow pointing to the left on a web browser with 'Back' underneath, next to the Forward arrow which points to the right. When you click on the back button you go back to the previous screen on a web site.

Banner A link (usually an advert) on a web page. The banner can be completely unrelated to what you are looking at on the website and usually contains pictures or moving objects.

Bebo One of the three most popular social networking sites in the UK, founded in 2005.

Becta Becta is the Government's lead agency for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in education, covering the United Kingdom. It was established in 1998 through the reconstitution of the National Council for Educational Technology (NCET). In March 2007, Becta was given an enhanced remit by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (which was then the DfES) to lead the co-ordination, development and delivery of the government's strategy to harness the power of technology to help improve education, skills and children's services, and to work closely with the DCSF and other partners to ensure that the potential of technology is taken fully into account in developing future policy.

Block To 'block' someone means that you can stop them contacting you online. It might be in a chat room, via email or instant messaging. If someone has upset you, is being inappropriate you can 'block' them from contacting you.

Blog A blog, also known as a weblog, is a form of online diary or journal. Blogs contain short or frequently updated posts, arranged chronologically with the most recently posted item appearing at the top of the page. In addition to text, blogs can contain, photos, images, sound, video, archives and related links, and can incorporate comments from visitors. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author of the website.

Browser A piece of software which allows you to use the World Wide Web. The two best known are Internet Explorer and Mozilla FIREFOX.

Broadband High speed internet connection

Bulletin boards Also can be called E-boards. An electronic notice board where people leave messages which are of interest to a lot of people.

Chat A way of communicating with people at the same time by typing messages which then appear on your computer screen, and are sent across the Internet to be read by everyone else participating in the chat. (Happening instantly).

Chat Room A place where chat happens on the Internet. A user can communicate with people instantly by typing messages which then appear on the computer screen, and are transmitted across the internet to be read by everyone else participating in the chat at that time. The conversation continues through the exchange of messages. Chat can either be moderated or un-moderated. In the latter case the conversation will be completely unsupervised. It is very easy to fake an identity when participating in a chat so be especially wary. A live video feed can be sent by using a web cam.

Conference Similar to chat, only a conference will probably have been arranged especially for a certain time and on a certain subject. When a web cam is used this is called a video conference.

Cookies A small text file sent by a web site and stored on your computer in order to record your activities on that site. Cookies are not computer programs but can store information such as your password, so you don't have to re-enter it each time you visit, and where you like to go on the site so you can be shown with information of interest to you when you return. However, when using open/public web access, the originators of the cookie can collect demographic information about you, and target services or advertisements back to you. Stored cookies can be used to analyse surfing behaviour within a website and keep track of users for a prolonged period of time. Cookies can be searched for and deleted.

Cyberbullying Describes bullying behaviours on the Internet and mobile phones.

Cyber Smart/ Net Smart Being aware of the potential pitfalls of the Internet and how to avoid them, or deal with them should they happen. It's a modern way of being streetwise.

Cyberspace Generally this is another way of referring to the Internet.

Discussion Forum A discussion site on the internet, often focusing on a special theme, where people can post messages. People generally respond to messages or add new ideas, although this is not always instant. Some discussion forums require registration. Some forums contain an archive, which means the content saved and can be found in a search. Some forums are moderated where the administrator of the forum has the right to delete or edit any messages posted or to ban abusive users.

Domain name A domain name locates an organisation or other entity on the Internet. For example, the domain name www.gridclub.com The "com" part of the domain name reflects the purpose of the organisation or entity (in this example, "commercial") and is called the top-level domain name. The "gridclub" part of the domain name defines the organisation or entity and together with the top-level is called the second-level domain name. The second-level domain name maps to and can be thought of as the "readable" version of the Internet address. A third level can be defined to identify a particular host server at the Internet address.

Download The process of transferring computer files from the Internet to your computer.

E-boards Also can be called Bulletin boards. An electronic notice board where people leave messages which are of interest to a lot of people.

E-commerce Buying and selling over the Internet.

E-mail An electronic message sent over the Internet. It can be sent just to one person or to many.

E-mail address Your personal address on the Internet. It is also often used as a means of identifying an Internet user, e.g. when they join up to services or take part in chats.

Emoticons Also known as 'smileys', are keyboard letters and symbols used to express a feeling such as a smile :-)

Facebook One of the three most popular social networking sites in the UK, founded in 2004.

Filter A way of preventing certain unsuitable types of material from reaching your computer, e.g. you might filter out web sites that show inappropriate pictures.

Filtered search engine Filtered search engines search the entire web rather than just through a handpicked selection of kid-safe sites. Results are then filtered to remove possibly inappropriate material.

Flickr A social networking site based around photo sharing

Friend Anyone who either accepts an invitation from another social networking site user to be friends, or who accepts an invitation from another user. When a user adds someone as a friend, their connection is displayed on the user's friends list. On social networking sites a friend can be an offline friend, a family member, an acquaintance, a friend of a friend or someone you have never met before.

Friends Reunited A group of social networking sites based around the same theme of getting back in contact with old school friends. The main site was founded in 1999.

Forum Refer to Discussion Forum

Habbo (or the Habbo Hotel) A social networking site aimed at teenagers which is based around virtual hotel rooms. Each user has a customisable avatar to represent them.

Homepage The first page you see when you start up a web browser or the first page of a web site.

ICT Information and Communications Technology

Inbox This is where all the email messages you have received are stored waiting for you to read.

Instant messaging A form of chat. It is text-based and real-time (happening instantly) with messages sent over the Internet between one or more people who often belong in each other's contact lists. Most popular Instant messaging services (such as MSN) require the user to register and create a contact list. Then whenever a member signs in all contacts are notified.

Install To load software or hardware on to a computer system.

Internet A worldwide network of connected computers.

IP Number Every computer connected to the Internet has its own number called an IP (Internet Protocol) number. This is like a name identifying that computer. It consists of four sets of figures separated by dots. An example of an IP number is: 165.113.245.2

ISP An Internet Service Provider: a company that provides access to the Internet.

Junk Mail Emails sent to thousands of random email addresses, usually to sell you something. They might tell you that you have won something but this is likely to be a con. The emails might even contain viruses.

Keyword(s) A word or phrase that describes the information that you are looking for.

Link Can be a web address, a button, word or a picture that links to another web site or web page or even an email address.

Log on To enter your password or user name and gain access to a computer or a network.

Log off To sign off from a computer or a network.

MMS Multimedia Messaging Service. This service is available on some mobile phones and allows you to send or receive messages which contain sound and pictures.

MSN groups An online community site created by Microsoft in 1995.

Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) On-line computer games that are capable of supporting hundreds of thousands of players simultaneously. Examples include: *Second Life*, *Runescape* and *World of Warcraft*.

Moblog A moblog is a blog published directly to the web from a phone or other mobile device. Moblogging is popular among people with camera-enabled cellphones which allow them to either e-mail photos and video that then appear as entries on a web site, or use mobile blogging software to directly publish content to a Web server. The word "moblog" is a portmanteau of mobile and weblog (or mobile and log).

Moderated Chat Room A chat room where, usually, an adult is present to ensure that the conversations taking place is appropriate for the age group. Some companies do not have a human presence in their Chat rooms. They use software which looks for particular words. If the words appear a moderator is notified and goes to take a look. If someone in the chat room is found to be breaking the rules usually they will be warned first and then, if they misbehave again, they can be thrown out and barred.

Moderating Looking after a chat room or news group so that anything unsuitable or unpleasant is dealt with immediately.

Moderator A person who looks after a chat room, or a Newsgroup.

My Space One of the three most popular social networking sites in the UK, founded in 2003.

Monitor Display screen sometimes called a VDU (Visual Display Unit)

Netiquette Made up from the words 'Net' and 'Etiquette' meaning unofficial rules of good behaviour for Internet users. (For example words written in capital letters can mean shouting).

Newsgroups Like an electronic bulletin board where people with similar interests can keep in touch and up to date. You post to the Newsgroup using email and you can often include attachments.

Offline If you are 'offline' your computer is not connected to the internet.

Online If you are 'online' you are live on the Internet.

Password A code that gives you access to a computer, network or web site. If anyone else discovers the password they can pretend to be you.

Piczo A social networking site launched in 2004 based around photos and website building.

Podcast An audio file which can contain music, speaking or a mixture of the two. Can be made by anyone from large companies like the BBC to individuals. They can be downloaded and played through iTunes or any other mp3 player.

Poke A gesture or symbolic cue on Facebook. A user who is poked by their friend receives a message saying "You have been poked by ..." Other sites have similar features such as nudging, giving five, or giving love.

Pop-up A new window that opens on top of the active internet browser window. This window does not usually contain its own web address, however in some cases it can do. Pop-ups that open without the user's request usually contain advertisements. Pop-up blockers are available as part of most browsers.

Pop-up blocker A pop-up blocker prevents website pop-ups from being displayed on the screen.

Posting A 'posting' is a message of some kind, usually in the form of an email which has been sent to a Newsgroup or a Chat room.

Privacy Policy A promise not pass on your name and address to someone else such as a web user, web site or company.

Programs Also called software programs. A list of coded instructions, which tells the computer how to do various tasks.

Profiles This usually refers to your personal profile, or information about you like your name, age and email address. Your profile tells people about who you are.

Reboot To restart a computer.

Register To sign on to a web site or chat room. You are normally required to give out some personal information e.g. your email address.

Sagazone A social networking site for the over-50's launched in 2007 by Saga.

Sandwich Board Theory The analogy between posting your profile on a web page or blog and walking up and down the high street wearing display boards showing their name, age, details, hobbies and pictures.

Search Engine If you do not already know the address of a web site you can use a search engine to find it for you. Normally you would just give the engine a clue as to the type of information you were looking for, e.g. 'Ancient Egypt' - these are known as keywords.

Second Life A Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game based around a virtual world, using avatars to meet others, socialise and create trade items, launched in 2003.

SMS or Short Message Service Short text messages of up to 160 characters sent or received by mobile phone.

Site A specific location on the Internet, generally a web site.

Skin The background or texture of a users profile. It can include patterns, animations, photos and other formatting. Many social networking sites allow users to edit their profile skin using html code.

Skype A software programme that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet.

Social Networking Sites Places on the Internet where people meet in cyberspace to chat, socialize, debate, and network. Sites such as myspace or bebo allow users to create an online profile that others can then search for and ask for permission to add that person to their list of friends. The online profile would usually include a photo, the user's age, gender, hometown and a list of their hobbies/favourite things. The user can also post a blog, music and video on their page. People on the user's friend list are allowed to send messages, leave comments or contact the user through instant messaging services.

Software Also called software programs. A list of coded instructions, which tells the computer how to do various tasks.

Spam Unwanted email which is often targeted at specific groups from companies.

Spyware A term generally referring to software that is secretly installed on a users computer and that spies on you while you are using the computer. You are unlikely to know that this is happening unless you have anti-spyware software installed on your computer. Most spyware tries to get the user to view advertising and/or particular web pages. Some spyware also sends information about the user to another machine over the Internet. Spyware is usually installed without a users' knowledge as part of the installation of other software, especially software such as music sharing software obtained via download.

Subscribe When you 'subscribe' to something on the Internet it is often free. You give your email address to an organisation, e.g. your favourite football club, and they send you information about themselves or their activities, events and so on. This can be a very valuable service but check to ensure that whoever you are giving your email address to will not then pass it on to other people or companies - they might bombard you with 'offers' for things you will never need or want.

Surf When you are browsing around, between and within web sites you are 'surfing'.

Text messaging or SMS Short text messages of up to 160 characters sent or received by mobile phone.

Unmoderated chat room A chat room where there isn't anyone checking humanly or technically that the conversations taking place are appropriate, unlike a moderated chat room.

Upgrade To improve your computer by installing or upgrading software or hardware.

URL An abbreviation for Uniform Resource Locator, which is another way of saying web 'address' e.g. www.gridclub.com

User-Generated Content (UGC) Online content that is produced by the users or consumers of the site. Examples include blogs, and photos and videos that users upload.

Virus A nasty piece of software which can do great damage to your computer or the programs on it. They often come as attachments to emails or on disks which might have been swapped. It is very important to use anti-virus software to stop them getting into your system and to prevent you from passing them on to anyone else.

Virus Checker A software program that carefully checks files and your computer for any viruses.

Web The Web, or the World Wide Web, is made up of a whole series of sites that have been put up by all sorts of organisations and individuals.

Web 2.0 A technical term describing a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted services - such as social networking sites and wikis, which facilitate collaboration and sharing between users.

Web browser A piece of software that allows you to use the World Wide Web. The two best known ones are *Internet Explorer* and *Mozilla FIREFOX*.

Webcam A webcam is a camera connected to a computer that is connected to the internet. A live picture is uploaded to a website from the camera at regular intervals, typically every few minutes. By looking at the website you can see what the camera sees - almost as it happens.

Web page A single file on a web site, the first file is called the homepage.

Web site A collection of files, or pages, on the *World Wide Web*.

Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity) A popular term used to describe how computers communicate without wires.

Wiki A wiki is a simple on-line database made up of a collection of webpages designed to enable anyone who accesses to contribute to or modify the content. Often used to create collaborative websites and power community websites. The collaborative encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*, is the best known. Wikis are used in business to provide intranets and knowledge management systems.

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