

A+ Parenting

Chapter Six

Safe Surfing

*The Internet is so big, so powerful and pointless
that for some people it is a complete substitute for life*

Andrew Brown

Surfing the web is potentially more dangerous than riding a monster wave off the California coast. Who knows what evil lurks in that electronic abyss so easily accessed by our smart devices. The real danger of sexual predators or identity thieves can ruin lives in a moment.

Equally dangerous is the mental dullness and insensitivity to reality that can develop as your children live in this virtual world of weird videos and imagined demons. It is highly unlikely that unlimited texting or tweeting produces well thought out writing or discussion of deeply philosophical ideas. The uncontrollable addiction to their EED's (Electronic Enjoyment Devices) is not virtual but has a horrific reality.

The oxymoronic nature of the Internet is that with all its detractions and potential evils, there has never existed a medium more conducive to in-depth research, highly creative products and even the potential to provide service to others and profit to individuals.

There is a real battle in progress as the easy entertainment duels with the productive potential of the Internet and our amazingly brilliant machines. Unfortunately, as the machines tend to get "smarter," the users can become dumber.

It is our job as parents to help guide our kids on a path to develop the desire and skills in using what is at their fingertips for an ally rather than a destructive force. We need to show them that the Internet is more than online games and that research is more than an online encyclopedia.

Positive Practical Protections

There are some simple actions you can do to help keep your kids safe and focused.

- Install a [content blocker](#) on computers used by your kids.
- Check the history of their computer use frequently.
- Place the family computer in a visible location.
- Establish a limit on the number of texts sent per month.
- Become a “friend” on your child’s social networks.
- Check the History of the computer after use
- Set a limit on the number of texts per month
- Check your data use bill and see if texts were sent when your child should have been in class
- Determine the amount of time spent texting per month then require an equivalent amount of time be spent reading

Some Positive Family Actions

It is not all negative, and there are many positive things you can do as a family in using the Internet.

- Access some online thinking games like chess or word games
- Make some family videos and upload them to YouTube
- Build a computer controlled robot
- Learn how to use “voice to text” for writing school papers
- Learn how to write and publish an ebook together
- Start a [family Internet business](#)
- Learn how to do geocaching... then do it.
- Start a family blog

Nothing Happens by Accident

Everything is a choice. Remember, the mind matters most.

Left to their own decision making process, it seems that most kids will somehow tend to make negative decisions. Your role as a parent is to model wise choices in your own personal use of modern technology and guide, even control, the use of your children.

Just as proper driving technique is a learned and developed skill, the same is true of computer use. Left on their own to become adept at driving a car, you can expect a wreck from your child. Do all you can to prevent a mental or emotional wreck in the world of using the Internet or cellphones.

