

+ Including Chatbudi top tips

Week by week, the Chatbudi eBook will give you our top tips to help manage your child's digital safety online

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Chatbudi is a digital technology startup dedicated to helping parents protect their kids online - anytime, anywhere.

www.chatbudi.com

Introduction to this guide

Children's digital footprints are being created before they even learn to walk. As parents we have the responsibility to teach our children how best to protect themselves online. To truly master this we first must understand our children's behaviours and attitudes online. Technology advances so quickly that online safety trends are constantly changing. At Chatbudi, we work with parents, children and teachers to stay at the forefront of these changes. The aim of this book is to help you decipher and understand your child's online world. We will regularly update our material to help you keep up with the latest trends.

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“Your child’s digital footprint often starts before they can walk and follows them around for life”

As parents today, it is likely that you made your first mark on the internet roughly a decade ago.

When your name is typed into an online search bar, there is a good chance that a social media profile will pop up; your latest tweets and perhaps your Facebook profile picture. Imagine a world where your digital footprint started as a child, and imagine how different this search would look today. Your children’s digital footprint starts before they begin to walk and follows them around for life. As a parent, you are responsible for what has

become known as your child’s “digital shadow”. Today’s technology means children have a social media presence before they are old enough in the eyes of the law to have a say on whether or not they want one.

We have had countless cups of tea with parents to learn about how Chatbudi can help them to protect their children’s digital footprint. Following on from listening to their concerns, the Chatbudi team has visited schools across Dublin, meeting pupils to find out more about current online trends. We have taken all of our research and put it together to bring to you this ‘Chatbudi Digital Parenting’ guide, giving you

full insights into your child’s online world and advice on how to protect them in cyberspace.

One important trend we at Chatbudi have observed is that when children go online they are increasingly *going mobile*. The danger with this trend is that children can be accessed by strangers or bullies anytime, anywhere. There is an emerging trend that young children own or have access to Wi-Fi enabled devices, i.e. iPods, iPads and Xbox consoles. Wi-Fi enabled devices allow children to access online games with chat functions, social networking sites and chat apps.

“As a parent, you are responsible for what has become known as your child’s digital shadow”

“The internet can help kids develop the life skill of digital literacy “

This new trend means that children no longer need a phone to chat with friends as they can simply use a chat app on a Wi-Fi enabled device.

The age children engage with the internet today is getting much younger. Children up to 3rd class enjoy a variety of online activities, including watching videos, playing games, searching for information, doing their homework and socialising within virtual worlds. The range of activities increases with age as children reach 4th, 5th and 6th classes and they begin to interact with social media sites, chat apps and online games. Examples of these include Snapchat, Instagram and FIFA

There are threats attached to many of these activities which, when ignored, can put your child in danger. The key threats to children when using age appropriate virtual worlds is the exposure and contact from strangers through fake profiles. Exposure to inappropriate content is also a significant threat on video sharing sites. When surfing the net for homework or games, children can also be exposed to inappropriate advertising. As kids progress to use social media, chat apps and online gaming, the risk of contact from strangers increases. The threat of cyber bullying also increases as more peers move online.

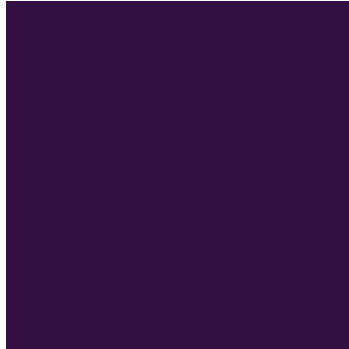
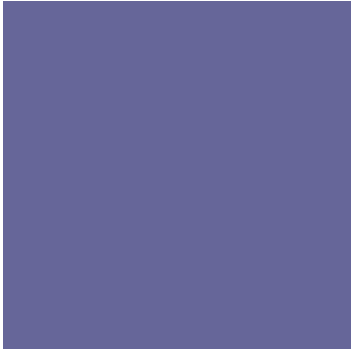
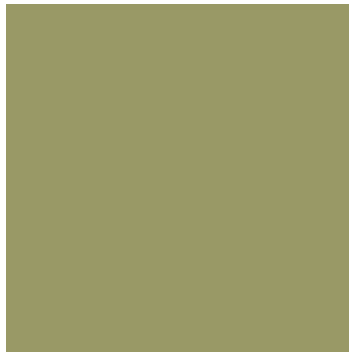
Your child will have a number of positive reasons for using the internet; education, entertainment and socialising with friends. The internet has a vast range of positive elements for our children. It helps them to develop the life skill of digital literacy. It lets them communicate with friends and family. It can even support children in accomplishing new goals such as coding, designing a poster or creating a video to share with friends and family. Despite the threats, there is no doubt that the internet is essential to a child's upbringing today.



The Chatbudi Mantra

“Treat the internet like a notice board”

Generally speaking, the content you post on the internet can not be removed or deleted. This is true for social networks, chat apps and photo sharing sites. Before you or your child post content online, ask yourselves “would I post this on a public noticeboard?”



Chatbudi top tips

Managing your child's digital footprint



1. If your child has access to a Wi-Fi enabled device, check what apps are downloaded
2. Research apps your child uses to determine if they are child-friendly (research before they download?)
3. Check if there is a chat function on your child's apps and games
4. Ensure your child is chatting only to real world friends when online
5. Encourage your child to access educational games on the internet and to develop their digital literacy skills responsibly

Next week: How to speak your kids language and actively mediate

How to Speak Your Kid's Language and Actively Mediate



LOL!

Laugh Out Loud!



+

'Kid's today are natives of the digital ecosystem'

Kids today are natives of the digital eco-system, leaving parents to feel like trespassers - tiptoeing around their world.

If this sounds familiar, then it's time to make yourself at home in their world, by learning how to speak their language and actively mediate through digital stumbling blocks such as cyberbullying.

It can be difficult to remember what you're trying to get across when speaking about an environment that you have a limited understanding of. Remember, the golden rule to online child safety is that **real friends = virtual friends**. The key to keeping your child safe online is to ensure that the people that they are interacting with online are also known to them in real life (friends and family).

GOLDEN RULE



Real friends
=
virtual friends



Three Steps to Speaking Your Child's Digital Lingo

Step 1:

Know what social media channels and digital outlets your child is using (Instagram, Snapchat, Skype, Viber, YouTube...the list goes on!). Simply find out by asking your child to show you the icons on their device and talk you through the name of each app. Your child may also be accessing social media and digital outlets through websites. Take a look through the history section on the browser of the laptop or the PC your child has access to, this



do not wish to be connected with their parents online. If your child would rather not be connected with you, you should respect their online space.

Step 3:

Once you feel comfortable using these channels, you are far better equipped to talk to your kids in a way that they will really understand.



will show you what websites they have recently visited.

Step 2:

Download these apps on your own device and try out these channels and outlets for yourself - play around and see what they are all about. Keep in mind that if you are setting up profiles, you should ask permission in the real world before sending your child a friend request in the virtual world. It is common that children



Examples of Questions to Ask

Instagram: Did you **favourite** anything today? Did you **follow** anyone new today?

Snapchat: What was your best Snapchat today? Have you made a Snapchat '**story**' today - tell me about it? Did you **save or 'screenshot'** any Snapchats?

Online gaming: What is your favourite online game? Who do you play with? Is that a friend from school or a **virtual friend**? (We'll have more on online gaming in Chapter 6; 'Hopscotch to Headsets')

Chat Apps: What do you prefer to use to chat to your friends? **Skype or Viber**? Why? Do you chat in **groups** or one-on-one? Is there any news from groups on platforms like **WhatsApp**?

If at first you don't succeed in talking with your child 'in their language', recruit a digital champion to help. This can be a babysitter, older cousin or sibling who can speak to them about their online activity, monitor safety and flag problems to you.



Top Tip Two of the most popular channels for kids are Instagram and Snapchat. **Instagram** is a photo sharing app, which children use to share their pictures and to chat to one another both publically and privately. They can also follow celebrities and brands.

Snapchat is also a photo sharing app. However it is different in that the photo disappears after a few seconds. This app is built for sharing with friends only, but there is a new function called 'discover' which shows advertising 'snaps' that disappears after 10 seconds. Messages sent and received also disappear within 10 seconds, and users can build a 'story' over the course of a day with photos and 10 second videos, which can be seen for 24 hours by all of their friends.

If you have trouble digesting all of these digital platforms, Chapter 4 of our e-book 'safely social' provides a beginners guide to each channel.

Active Mediation

By speaking to children about their digital experiences you are giving them the opportunity to open up to you

about their online world. Show your kids that you're interested in speaking their language and understanding their world. When they allow you into their online world, you can understand their feelings towards it. Are they happy when they talk about these apps? Do they show any anxiety? Are they very secretive?

It is important to have these regular conversations to ensure you are monitoring your child's relationship with the internet. Once you are able to have these chats with your children, you will be able to talk more effectively about problems they have online and the potential threats that exist.



'It is important to have these regular conversations to ensure you are monitoring your child's relationship with the internet''

There are Three Key Steps to Active Mediation...

Step 1: Be aware of what social media channels and digital outlets your child is using (Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube...the list goes on). Familiarise yourself with these apps, and their functionality. It's important to know what these apps can do, as well as knowing how to block other users, so that you know what your child can do on the app, as well as being able to guide them in blocking anyone they do not wish to be friends with.

Step 2: Remember to consult with your child face-to-face before sending them a virtual friend request from your own profile(s). Kids can be sensitive about their digital world and may not be open to befriending their parent online. It is often best to encourage open discussion regarding their virtual life, rather than force the issue.

Step 3: Virtual problems in a real way

When your child comes to you with an online problem, take it offline immediately. Give a sense of acceptance by explaining to them that they have done the right thing by telling you. Next, ask them to talk you through the problem. Once you understand the problem take the virtual problem into the real world. If your child is following the golden rule, they will be only connected with their real friends. If it is a case of cyberbullying the key is to speak to a teacher at school or the parent of the bully to resolve the problem. If it is a 'virtual friend' block the user from your child's profile, ensure the child has privacy settings on and delete and block any other 'virtual friends'.



There are many other problems which can occur aside from cyberbullying or communication from a stranger, such as exposure to content which is not age appropriate, exposure to unwanted advertising and internet addiction. More detailed solutions to these problems will be outlined in chapter 7 'Your Child's Online Safety Belt'.



+ Next Week: The Virtual Schoolyard Bully