A brief guide to keeping your child safe online.

Welcome back and hope you've had a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

As some children may have received new technology or related games at Christmas, here is a quick reminder about the importance of setting up appropriate parental controls.
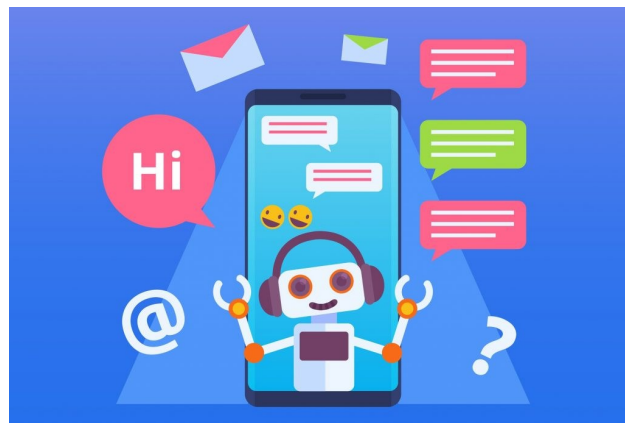

Games and Consoles

Check the age ratings: look at the PEGI rating of any new game. REGI rates the gameplay so whilst it is important to review age ratings, you must also check to see if it has any communication elements.

- If the game does allow your child to communicate with others, talk to your child about who they may be chatting with. Use the settings that are appropriate to your child. E.g. Allow only friends and family or disable online communication entirely.

AI Chatbots and Companions

A simple search of "AI Chat" within an App store highlights the number of AI apps already available. Many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to your child about the risks associated with them.
Examples of these that your child may already have are Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+).

Roblox

Following a recent ITV investigation which found extremist content on Roblox, it may be important to know what to be aware of. Roblox is a platform consisting of a collection of games. Players can either create games or play games that other users have created. It is free to download (though you have the option of in app purchases), and can be played across a number of different devices. It is therefore important to be aware of what your child is accessing, as what may look initially like a harmless game, could have game play which is inappropriate.

Be aware of...

Game content— users create games, so the content / theme may not always be appropriate.

Chat Facility— Players can chat with each other (users under the age of 13 should need parent permission to access certain chat features though). Understand the settings, you can turn chat facility off completely or allow only to communicate with friends.

Virtual Currency— Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) so be aware of what your child is spending money on.

What else can I do...?

Know where the report features are on the different apps / games / websites that your child visits. Chat to your child regularly about what they are doing online and remind your child that if anything is worrying them, then they should talk to you or another trusted adult.

Lets continue to keep all children safe when accessing online content.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this newsletter.

Mr R Elson
Techie Tips!