

e-Safety Newsletter

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Social Media

Safety must come first

Creating a better internet

By children and young people

Ballyclare High School

Using social media



Alan is a consultant who has worked in the education sector for many years. Previously the service manager for 350 schools and also leading on internet safety, he has a deep understanding of the needs and frustrations of schools.

Alan now works for himself, in partnership or collaborating with many others, across the country helping and advising schools, charities and other organizations with a particular focus on e-safety.

Contact Alan

☎ **01522 25 30 88**

✉ alan@esafety-adviser.com

🐦 twitter.com/esafetyadviser

A message from Alan Mackenzie

If you're a regular reader, you'll know that I'm a great supporter in the potential for positive change that social media gives us. This isn't because social media is anything special, but simply because it's where billions of people are, on one platform or another.

But, where there are large gatherings of people, invariably there are bad elements, whether in the real or virtual world, and this is where social media is a huge disappointment - safety and privacy tend to be an afterthought. That may well be a perception, but it's one shared by a great many.

Social networking is free, the apps are free, but there's no such thing as free. These companies make an extraordinary amount of money out of us, we are the revenue; our personal data, targeted advertising. It's time that safety is put at the top of the shareholder agenda, not more money-making ideas.

Social Media

Safety must come first

The recent, and ongoing campaign by the NSPCC ([Net Aware](#)) is great to see. If you're not aware of it take a look; put simply it's about making parents and educators aware of realistic opinions around social media and games in regards to important things such as age and content ratings. This isn't the 'self-regulated' ratings, but the opinions of 2,000 children and 500 parents.

Social networks are rarely out of the limelight when it comes to questionable content, what they allow and don't allow, the difficulties they have in keeping under-aged users from creating profiles and lots more. But I'm afraid I have little sympathy; anybody who has ever owned or managed a business (and a school is a business) will know that you have to scale appropriately, so why do social networks not scale safety? Perhaps they do, but I would argue that it isn't enough, and it's always an afterthought.

Privacy, security and user safety must be a prime consideration of any service. In my opinion privacy should be on by default when any user signs up for an account on anything, and then the user has to make the informed choice to switch it off.



Social Media

Continued

Are we ever going to get to the point where we don't see headlines such as potential harm coming to children and young people because of [online bullying](#) etc.?

I would doubt that very much, but it should never stop us from trying. Now don't get me wrong, I know there are lots of talks going on with government and advisory bodies in regards to age ratings, accessibility, privacy and security, rights online and much more, but when are we going to actually 'see' anything happening that has a real, positive, research-led outcome?

The initiative to implement internet filters to [96% of UK households](#) by the coalition government last year? Good in theory but woeful in its thought and delivery! The implementation of e-safety into the Computing curriculum in Sept 2014? Don't get me started.

One positive thing I did welcome was the e-safety inspection framework from Ofsted. Although the main document has now been redacted, the principles remain.

It was initially felt by some schools that this was an extra pressure, but personally I thought it was a good move as it laid out standardised expectations, none of which were difficult or time-consuming to implement.

This was an area where many schools had been struggling as there was very little advice or guidance in regards to what Ofsted expected. With that said, we are expecting some further changes with the new Common Inspection Framework. Quite what these changes are I'm not sure yet, but rest assured I will keep you informed as soon as I know.

As usual, whilst various bodies meet, discuss and debate on these topics for years to come the pressure is on you to deal with the actual issues but let me assure you of this: as I travel to schools all around the country every week I am continually warmed by the hard work that is being done. You may not think it, you may not get any thanks for it, but trust me we do know what you are doing in order to educate the children to keep themselves safe under extraordinarily difficult circumstances and we are thankful for it.

As I've said many times before, use social media for the power of positive good that it can do. Parental engagement is one of the hardest and most frustrating aspects, not just with e-safety, but as a whole. Use it to celebrate the good work that you're doing.

If you've ever seen the film '[Field of Dreams](#)',

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME!

Children and Young People

Creating a better internet

Sonia Livingstone is one of my 'go-to' people when it comes to e-safety. She is a Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics and an Executive Board Member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS). Importantly for me, her research in different areas, particularly EU Kids Online, is vitally important in the areas that I work, especially for my talks with parents, school staff, students etc.

In a [recent blog post](#) Prof. Livingstone looks at device usage by younger children (6-7 year olds) in their homes and also spoke to their parents. This is extremely useful because, as Prof. Livingstone states, most research is conducted with older children, particularly teenagers, and yet as more and more younger children are using devices such as tablets there is a real need for this type of research.

For me personally I find a lot of other research frustrating, ordinarily concentrating on 'what' children and young people are doing, rather than 'why'. For those schools that have heard me speak you will know that I always say that the 'why' is far more important to me than the 'what' because if we can understand the former, we can help a lot more educationally with the latter.

But one particularly interesting statement in the blog is whether children's online activities are imaginative and stimulating, specifically in regards to educational apps and that's a really good point. Ask parents what their children do and it's usually YouTube and one or two apps that have been picked out by Mum or Dad. Many older children now play games such as Minecraft which really confuses a lot of parents; why does something that looks like it was designed in the mid-80's keep children occupied for such long

periods of time? Simply because it's creative and imaginative, it doesn't have to have all the bells and whistles of artificial intelligence and real-life looking characters, and what's more it can be very positive educationally; children are learning by doing and playing.

And here's where I think we're missing a trick.

There has been a lot of talk about computing in the curriculum over the last couple of years, particularly in relation to coding.

The new Computing curriculum allows for a huge amount of creativity to be embedded across all key stages and there is scope for a lot more. The best creative minds are those of children and young people. At the ripe old age of late 40's I couldn't dream of creating something that would hold the attention and captivate children, I'm way past that stage. But children and young people can; they can create opportunities not only for themselves but for others too. The creation of an app, a game, a support and advice website, a video or series of podcasts can be a long term project which draws in many important areas of the curriculum such as e-safety, literacy and digital literacy, PSHE, Citizenship (including digital citizenship) and others.

This is where I think we need to be heading, where there is a tangible outcome that can continue to be developed by any students who have a wish to do so whilst taking into account many different aspects of the curriculum. It's all in the planning, which is where a whole school ethos comes together.

Social Media at Ballyclare High School

by Mhairi Hill

As a teacher, one of the most powerful tools in our Social Media toolbox is Twitter.

As eSafety Coordinator at a large Grammar School in Northern Ireland, my approach to Twitter has always been to harness the potential benefits whilst minimising the risk.

When exploring the use of Social Media with our staff eSafety Forum, Twitter came up trumps for two reasons:

transparency, and the freedom to utilize multiple accounts.

Transparency is something that's incredibly important for any professional in a position of trust: for the same reason that, at minimum, we have glass panels in our classroom doors - protection of both pupils and staff. The latter is something that the likes of Facebook doesn't allow - multiple profiles allow you to harness the power of Twitter as a developing professional, as someone's teacher, as a parent...

- I communicate with my pupils
- I network with like-minded professionals
- and I have a school account for our Digital Leaders

And I don't have thousands of followers - or follow thousands - but the ideas and resources that have been shared and the connections that I've made have been plentiful!



Staff from our eSafety Forum embarked on a pilot that helped us to determine what worked for our school community and this work helped progress our Social Media Policy.

With my eSafety hat on, it was important that we didn't venture into this online world without first trialling with a smaller number of staff and pupils. It was only upon completion of this pilot and the ratification of our eSafety and Social Media Policies that our staff were actively encouraged to engage with members of the school community through the platform of Twitter.

Indeed, teacher unions advise that teaching staff should refrain from using Social Media with pupils until the school has a Social Media Policy, and I would suggest that this would be a minimum requirement.

Staff training should also be thorough covering e-safeguarding of pupils, protecting professional reputation and social media 'literacy'.

At a recent Staff Development Day I presented on the benefits of Twitter, and the Prezi can be viewed [HERE](#).

It's an 'information network' - when used consistently and frequently by a school, Twitter streamlines communication with parents and the wider community.

It's a tool in our Teaching & Learning toolbox - when used in an innovative and creative way, Twitter provides opportunities to stretch, challenge, encourage and motivate pupils, flipping the classroom and removing restrictions that the school day can impose.

But where the most value lies is in the wealth of the 4.2 million tweets that come from the fingertips of our counterparts across the globe. Twitter is, by far, the richest and most accessible CPD portal available to teachers at this point in time. If you've yet to discover it, then you'd best go exploring now... #DiscoverTwitter

Are you using technology and/or social media innovatively in your school?

Send me an email and share your story with thousands of others.

Follow the accounts:

[@mrs_hill08](#) (Mhairi - article author)

[@BHS_DL](#) (digital leaders/esafety)

[@BallyclareHigh](#) (school account)





CIS Summit 2015



Are the children in your school safe online?

Hear directly from OFSTED, NSPCC, CEOP and other leading experts at the Child Internet Safety Summit, 3rd July, QEII Conference Centre, Westminster, London.

Register your FREE place now *

** State funded schools only*

For more information visit www.childinternetsafety.co.uk

Bits n Bytes



IMPORTANT

The way that major search engines return image searches is changing, and this may have an effect in your school. Make sure your IT support are aware.

<http://bit.ly/1FGJyaZ>



Radicalisation

London Grid for Learning have released some wonderful new resources for everyone to use. I would recommend all your staff and governors take a look.

<http://bit.ly/1GaODf3>



Dropbox for Schools

Is Dropbox safe to use for schools? Dom Norrish takes a look in this blog post with some great, useful information.

<http://bit.ly/1KT5NgO>

I'm really impressed with the work and ethos of the [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#), and as such I recently became an Associate Member. In forthcoming newsletters I will start sharing relevant news and information from ABA to keep you updated and informed of research and initiatives, such as the annual Anti-Bullying Week in October. The theme for 2015 is, 'Make a Noise about Bullying.'



for Parents and Children

Whenever I'm doing parents talks in schools, an hour isn't a lot of time to get across much information. Therefore, I've created a new [website](#) which is essentially an extension to my talks, and simply signposts parents to relevant information, advice and resources. There is also a dedicated [Facebook](#) page where there are more regular updates.. Feel free to link on your school website.



Contact Alan Mackenzie

☎ 01522 25 30 88

✉ alan@esafety-adviser.com

🐦 twitter.com/esafetyadviser