

Keeping Kids Safe Online

My computer is in my room, but they sometimes look over my shoulder.

My computer is in our living room, but they may not be home when I'm on the Internet.

Always make sure you know that.

The Internet is kind of scary – it's wide open to anyone.

Someone can use your info and steal your identity.

Well, it might affect a job interview or college application.

The Internet is an incredible resource for our children but on every parent's mind there's a question of how do I talk to my kids about surfing the Net safely without jeopardizing our relationship and their trust? So what can you do to protect them? Today we have those answers and we're going to help you with other cyber safety questions. Here now is Marie Hattar from Cisco. Welcome Marie.

Hi Carolyn. It's great to be here.

Well thanks for joining us and like you I have two very young children and they are on the Internet. Also like you I'm a very busy executive and I'm constantly looking over our kids shoulders and see what they're doing on the Internet. So how do we protect our children?

So let's first start off with a reality that the Internet has surpassed TV as the most essential medium. And we as parents think typically that the PCs are the way that they get access to the Internet. And we put security policies on those and we put them in public rooms so we can look over their shoulders. But the other thing to realize is that kids can access the Internet from cell phones these days, from itouches, ipads from wii games and a lot of those devices don't necessarily have security policies embedded so we as parents have to be a lot more diligent. We also have to communicate to our kids; we need to let them know that they should not share anything on line that they wouldn't want to stand up in front of the class and announce to the whole class.

And we also need to educate them on what to do if they're ever Cyber bullied. And that is don't respond; don't retaliate and go to someone they trust and ask for help. And so the key message in all of this is that we need to be very proactive in securing the kids. The other thing I'd like to highlight is we live in what I call a borderless world where this concept of going to work and just being at work and coming home and being just mommy and daddy at home has really shifted today. Home is a lot of times where we work and at work we're often doing home type duties. And so that's introducing a lot more devices into the home that kids can actually touch and get access to the Internet so we have to take some extra precautions with those.

And without a doubt there are risks associated with this. So as parents, what should we do?

Well one of the things to realize is also that 80% of Web traffic out there is considered dark, or uncategorized. And so that means our dependency on technology to filter against those sites can only protect our kids so far. So we need to make sure that, one, we understand what are all the different devices that they can get access to the Internet on. Categorize all of those. We also need to be more diligent in looking at the things like the privacy policies, setting up the right privacy capabilities in terms of the different applications and staying on top of social media, because that's constantly evolving. Doing simple things like be-friending them on things like Facebook, even though they'll probably resist that. But I think it's important that we're very proactive in some of that. And then last but not least is to leverage some of the technology, such as Cisco Valet for example, with parental controls.

Now this Valet, how tech savvy do you have to be in order to install this?

You absolutely have to be an IT admin. No, I'm just joking. It's actually really simple to configure. And the assumption is that most of our kids are actually more tech savvy than we as parents are. So it actually comes in a box with a little USB key that you stick into your PC and that gives you wireless access, as well as provides you with security policy that you can go in there and configure for whatever things you want to allow your kids to see or not see.

Well it sounds easy enough and we're a big fan of simple. But I have guests that go into my computers and while they're friends and neighbors and I certainly want to give them access but I'm very wary about my own password. How can I protect myself and not also give my password away?

Sure. Valet comes with a capability that when guests are accessing the Internet they'll actually have a home screen and they can go in there and provide their password for guest access.

Well, Marie that's great information. Any last thoughts?

A couple of things. As parents, be proactive in monitoring where the kids have gone to. Make sure you go into the browser and check the history. And the other thing, for more information go to Cisco.com/go/café or home.cisco.com

Well Marie thanks again thanks for being here and sharing such valuable information.

It's great to be here and to talk about such an important topic.

© 2010 Cisco and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.