



ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 3 Issue 12

As the year draws to a close, it's a good time to reflect on the good, the bad and the ugly of 2012. Learning from past experiences can help us to make 2013 a safer and more enjoyable year online.

The good

2012 saw a number of fantastic youth-driven initiatives to promote the safe and responsible use of technology. Young people often do want to take action and have a role in addressing the issues which confront them and should never be underestimated as important cyber safety stakeholders.

Some of the great campaigns developed this year by young people included [Back Me Up](#) and [Keep It Tame](#).

Aside from the more structured approaches listed above, young people have taken a stand against anti-social online behaviour in their everyday lives as well. Look at the story of Maisie from the US who asked friends on Facebook to wear pigtails to school as a sign of solidarity against bullying. Young people, using technology, can have a powerful impact on their peers. You can read about Maisie [here](#).

When we think about young people's use of technology, we often think of the negatives. It's important that we recognise that technology can be a powerfully positive tool and social space for children and young people.

The bad

Time2Talk

In this section we look at ways to start talking with children and young people about their use of technology.

What was your best experience with technology in 2012?

What was your worst experience with technology in 2012?

Have you learned any lessons about technology which will change how you use it in 2013?

What could you do in 2013 to better support your friends in their use of technology?

What could I do to better support your use of technology?

Looking into the crystal ball

No one can accurately predict what 2013 will bring us, but there are certainly some things which we should prepare ourselves for:

Mobile devices – with more and more children owning smartphones and a flourishing market for tablet devices, we can be sure that the internet will increasingly be accessed from anywhere and everywhere. This means we have to ensure our children and young people understand the challenges they may face and how they

A fair amount of media attention was focussed on bullying and harassment through social media in 2012. A number of twitter comments against public figures which were vitriolic and harmful again raised the issue of cyberbullying and its impacts.

Whilst these incidents may have called attention to the problem of cyberbullying, it also showed us that even adults aren't sure how to overcome this challenge. How can we expect young people to build resilience and move past cyberbullying if even adults struggle to do so? We need to continue to develop effective strategies for conflict resolution, resilience and behaving as an ethical bystander and make sure they are clearly communicated to all users, not just children and young people.

The ugly

The treatment of women in online gaming spaces

Gendered violence and aggression in online gaming spaces may not have made headlines across the globe but it is a pervasive problem which demands our attention. With a number of Australian children participating in online gaming, it is likely that they will find themselves either playing games which promote the maltreatment of women or witnessing aggression towards female gamers.

Many parents I have spoken to show astonishment when their normally polite and respectful son becomes aggressive and demeaning towards women in a game. There is still no consensus as to whether violent video games lead to violence offline, but the discrimination against women in any form must be discouraged if we are to live in a time of gender equality.

All gamers, young and old, need to consider how their online actions affect other people. The purpose of the game may be to destroy your opponent, but it's not part of the plot to attack them for who they are outside of the game.

It's not only in playing the game that females are discriminated against, but even more broadly across the gaming industry. Many females in the gaming industry took to twitter to highlight the sexism they have experienced in the workplace. The #1reasonwhy hashtag was

can overcome them, as they will likely meet these challenges away from the supervision of their parents. We must continue to discuss the ethical use of technology and provide encouragement and support for children and young people.

Scandals – there will be scandals involving technology in 2013 which will likely attract media attention. Let's use these scandals as opportunities for learning and make sure we have some examples of the positive uses of technology so that young people have positive behaviours that they can model, not just the negative behaviours they see on the news.

New apps, technologies and devices – the world of technology is constantly changing and whilst you may have just got your head around instagram, chances are 2013 will bring something new to learn about. Instead of worrying about the daunting task of having to learn about even more technologies, remember to focus on the behaviours and relationships being played out through technology, not the technology itself. Lean on your strengths as a parent, carer or teacher and you will feel more confident in dealing with issues occurring through technology.

Season's Greetings

The team at ThinkUKnow Australia would like to wish all our subscribers a very happy, safe and enjoyable holiday season. We look forward to continuing to promote the safe and responsible use of technology in 2013!

Remember, you can stay in touch with us over the festive season through twitter @ThinkUKnow_Aus #ThinkUKnow.

Best wishes from ThinkUKnow Australia!

trending on twitter as women detailed their experiences of discrimination and shone the light on an ugly trend. You can read about it [here](#).

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