



ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - Volume 3 Issue 9

During one of my recent rants about the stupid things that people do online, I realized that there are three things which don't seem to be that common anymore: common courtesy, common decency and commonsense. In an age where the focus is often on benefiting the individual over the group, and the technical means to do so, it can sometimes feel as though we've lost touch with our common man (or woman!) We may use technology to stay in touch with our friends and family, but we can also be isolating ourselves from our broader community and how we affect and are affected by them. In this issue of the ThinkUKnow e-newsletter, we'll look at how we can #bringbackthecommon (please feel free to use this hash tag on twitter to share your thoughts!) in our digital interactions.

Common courtesy

Common courtesy used to be the standard in polite society and was often demonstrated through respectful behaviour and following contemporary standards of etiquette. The kind of behaviour you often see in black and white films or how your grandparents interact with others. In a digital age, manners and courtesy are still important and we need to practice using them so that they simply become second nature.

So how do we show common courtesy online? It could be in thanking people for their kind words on twitter, [asking someone's permission](#) before sharing their photo online, or not answering "maybe" to a Facebook event invite (since when did an RSVP let you say "maybe"?) It all

Time2Talk

This section provides some useful conversation starters for talking with young people about their use of technology.

Do you think people behave differently online than they do in person?

Is this a good or a bad thing?

Do you think about your action online before you do them?

Who do you think should enforce rules around respectful behaviour online?

So what do these commonsense actions look like in our digital interactions? It might be blocking harassing communications instead of responding to them. It includes thinking carefully about what personal information we share online and how it could be misused. Commonsense means [thinking before doing](#) in all our interactions.

Bring back the common

It's all well and good to complain about "young people today" and reminisce on how perfect the past was but we're simply echoing the thoughts of every generation before us. Society is changing and will continue to evolve, but if we value certain aspects of our society as important, we need to take action to ensure they are passed

simply boils down to showing respect for others in how we interact online.

Common decency

Our actions affect many more people than just ourselves and as members of a community, it is our duty to ensure that our actions don't cause unnecessary inconvenience to others. In a world where the possibilities are endless we still need to be reminded of the importance of common decency - just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

Unfortunately, we often see the absence of common decency in digital interactions. It's as though when we engage through a screen, we turn off our internal filtering system which stops every single thought in our brain from being shared and only lets the socially acceptable ones through. Instead, we see young people [bullying](#) and harming others under the excuse of 2BH (to be honest) when in every other instance we'd recognize it as just a ploy 2BH (to be hurtful). We also see adults posting vitriolic comments because they think using a fake name means they don't have to use their moral compass.

Commonsense

Let's not pretend otherwise - commonsense hasn't been that common for quite some time. We often see people doing stupid things or taking the wrong actions and we sit back and comment on what they should have done instead - but hindsight is 20/20! In the heat of the moment, we can struggle to see the whole situation clearly and take action based on emotions instead of informed consideration. The only thing we can do is consider what might go wrong and what we should do if it does happen - kind of like a "worst-case scenario" handbook for digital life.

onto and valued by generations to come. If you think common courtesy, common decency and commonsense are important, then make sure you are upholding and promoting them.

This month, I challenge you to show common courtesy, common decency and commonsense in all your digital interactions and challenge your child to do so as well! Let us know how you go by using the twitter hashtag #bringbackthecommon or [contacting us via email](#). Hopefully, we can bring them back into common usage! Come on!

National Child Protection Week

This week (3 - 8 September) is also National Child Protection Week. Visit www.playyourpart.org.au to find out how you can participate in activities to promote the safety of children.

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