

BullGuard - Safer Internet Day 2018

Submitted by: The PR Room

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For Safer Internet Day 2018, cybersecurity leader, BullGuard, discusses how we can connect with our children to make their online world safer

LONDON, FEBRUARY 5, 2018 - The 6th of February is Safer Internet Day (<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2018>). Celebrated by thousands of organisations the world over, it aims to encourage safe and positive use of digital technology among children and young people and start conversations about just how important this is.

Today's generation are true digital natives; babies tap screens as soon as they can move their little fingers, toddlers navigate around simple apps with ease and older children play networked games or cruise across social media with all the unconscious naturalness of breathing. The digital world is their domain.

Safer Internet Day aims to create a better and safer online community for this generation. It calls upon young people, parents, carers, teachers, companies, policymakers and all those who work with children and young people to join together in helping to create a better and safer internet.

Safe and secure

Parents understand that the Internet offers their children a wealth of educational and learning opportunities. At the same time there are concerns about the dark, unpoliced side of the Internet.

With this in mind and in the spirit of Safer Internet Day, cybersecurity leader, BullGuard (<https://www.bullguard.com/>) has released a valuable Parents' Guide to Protecting Children Online (<https://www.bullguard.com/community/resources/customer-guides/a-parents-guide-to-protecting-children-online.aspx>) and also offers the following useful pointers to help connect with children and their online world:

- Be open about the dangers such as 'stranger danger' and encourage the children to talk about their concerns.
- Restrict young children's use of devices to where the family gathers rather than in their rooms.
- Use the internet together. Understand what it is that your children like, what draws them in and what they enjoy. This opens the door to talks about some of the things that are not healthy.
- Be positive and embrace the technologies that your children enjoy and remember how much fun you would have had if these technologies were available when you were a child.
- Actively engage with children online. Take time to explore the games and services that your children are using or want to use. It's fun to join them in some of the games too, though they may leave you behind in a cloud of digital dust.
- Look out for any safety features that may be available on the games and platforms they engage with

and explain why these safeguards are important to encourage your children to auto enrol themselves.

Parental controls

You might also consider parental controls. These enable you to discretely manage what your children are able to do online.

For instance, you can protect them by blocking inappropriate websites. It's an effective way of stopping your children stumbling across unsuitable or malicious and hate-fuelled content. You might even consider blocking sites containing content about alcohol, tobacco and gambling.

Using the parental controls in BullGuard Internet Security

(<https://www.bullguard.com/products/bullguard-internet-security>) you can define what content your children can access, tailored to age groups, from 3 to 7, 8 to 12 and 13 to 17 years.

You can also block chat tools and instant messaging applications. These can be used by strangers with bad intentions to lure children into 'private' conversations. Parental controls also enable you to set limits on the length of time children can access the Internet.

Limiting damage

Young people are naturally curious, so they might seek out some of this content themselves, but it is also easy for them to find these things accidentally which is why parental controls are particularly helpful. Sometimes they can also be exposed to damaging content by friends.

Your children are individuals and will react differently if they are unwittingly exposed to unsavoury content but the reality is that in some cases children can become confused and experience psychological effects like nightmares.

If the lines of communication are open, thankfully children will naturally approach their parents to talk about something that they have seen online. In this instance, BullGuard offers the following pointers to help pacify fears and dampen anxieties:

- Try not to blame children about how they came across material, rather reassure them that it isn't their fault.
- It's important to help children manage their feelings. You can provide comfort and assurance and explain that it's normal to feel angry or scared, upset or confused.
- Don't trivialise the incident, for instance, by saying the material may not be real. This can undermine a child and implies that how they feel isn't valid. In fact, let them know that you are happy that they came to you and talked about it.
- It's also a good idea not to over react by taking away their computer. This implies that they are at fault in some way and also makes it less likely that they will talk to you if they come across further disturbing content.

An important day

Safer Internet Day is important. It's an acknowledgement that today's children and young people need to be aware of the harmful side of the internet. As adults we can help them successfully navigate the pitfalls.

But more than this, it also teaches a sense of responsibility among our digital natives. As they grow and learn, a sense of responsible engagement will also infuse their thinking and inform their behaviour helping them positively shape and develop the future online world even further.

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About BullGuard

BullGuard is a leader in consumer cybersecurity. We make it simple to protect everything in your digital life – from your data, to your identity, to your Smart Home. BullGuard combines technical expertise with a genuine understanding of your needs to deliver complete protections across all your connected devices. As part of our ongoing promise to be champion of today's digital consumer, we've added Dojo by BullGuard to our multi-award winning product portfolio. It's the best custom-built solution to protect Wi-Fi enabled devices in the home, and gives customers the freedom to add as many Smart Home devices as they want without compromising privacy or security. Dojo by BullGuard is the cornerstone of a Smart Home, ensuring a connected world where every consumer, in every home, is smart, safe and protected.

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