

# Teaching internet safety

## Why?

Children, young people and their families tend to be in the forefront of new media adoption, benefiting from early take-up of new opportunities afforded by the internet, mobile and broadband content, online games, peer-to-peer technologies, and so forth. However, they also encounter a range of risky or negative experiences for which they may be unprepared. These risks, the everyday contexts in which they occur, and the ways in which they are being addressed, are all subject to continual change.

Traditionally we have countered the negative aspects of media by developing media literacy programmes that focused on protecting children from the false and corrupting influence of harmful content. This approach is less effective in the face of the avalanche of content now available to children through the internet. There is still a place for this approach as we can see in the provision of content filtering on the schools broadband network. While this is an effective measure; no filtering system is 100% effective. Given the ubiquity of internet access it would be naïve of us to assume that children will always access the internet in a moderated environment. In this context, it is vital that we implement education programmes that focus on empowerment, prioritising critical thinking and engagement rather than a defensive approach.

## How?

The NCTE has developed the *Webwise* internet safety education programmes that encourage students to read, analyse, and decode internet content in ways similar to the appreciation of print literacy. We are also promoting the use of internet technologies as instruments of self-expression and creativity through the Safer Internet Day



Competition 2008; 'Life online is what YOU make of IT'.

### Webwise internet safety primary education programmes

Internet safety education is well

opinion" while at the same time they are to be "given opportunities to explore the range of information available to them through information and communication technologies".

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grounded in the primary curriculum in Ireland. Media education is specifically provided for in SPHE which consists of three strands: 'I, 'I and Others' and 'I and the Wider World'. The final strand contains two themes – 'Developing Citizenship' and 'Media Education'. There is a dual emphasis at this level which is split between protection and empowerment. For example, teacher guidelines state that children are encouraged to "examine the media in a critical way and to explore how they can influence behaviour and

Teaching information-handling skills and digital literacy skills can be integrated within the context of the curriculum. *Webwise* has designed *Surfwise* and *Chatwise*; two interactive online lessons each with accompanying classroom and teaching resources. Both teaching modules target the seven to 12 year old pupil and can be found at [www.webwise.ie/LearningResources](http://www.webwise.ie/LearningResources)

The *Surfwise* Teaching Module encourages children to learn effective search skills, critical awareness and digital

literacy. The interactive online lesson introduces Fionn and Niamh as they begin to surf the internet and is accompanied with easy-to-print classroom and take-home activities. As personal safety issues in regard to internet use have emerged as an area of concern for children the *Chatwise* Teaching Module has been designed to give them the opportunity to explore the issues of security and personal safety. In *Chatwise* Fionn and Niamh are now learning to email and chat and the paper-based classroom activities allow for discussion and exploration of the issues raised both in class and at home.

### Safer Internet Day Competition 2008; 'Life online is what YOU make of IT'

Safer Internet Day 2008 will be celebrated on 12 February 2008. Children between the ages of 5-10 years are invited to create posters, flyers, comic-strips, post-cards, films, mobile movies, music/songs, video-clips and power-point presentations that express their ideas about the internet. If you want to get involved you can get more information on [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) or email [internetsafety@ncte.ie](mailto:internetsafety@ncte.ie).

### Involving parents

Parents are the primary gatekeepers to their children's use of the internet. The *Webwise* 2006 survey found that younger children are to a larger degree introduced to the internet at home. In fact 60% of children will use the internet for the first time at home, 22% at school, 7% with friends, 2% in an internet café, 6% in other places. The National Parents' Council Primary (NPC) working with the NCTE has developed a seminar to take the mystery out of the internet for parents and to give them the skills to engage with their children's online lives. The seminar gives a practical demonstration of the technologies and the websites young



people are using. Participants hear young people talking about how they use the internet, why it is attractive to them, and get an insight into children's main concerns about being online. If you are interested in holding a seminar for parents in your school you can get more information on [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) or email [internetsafety@ncte.ie](mailto:internetsafety@ncte.ie). Seminars can be delivered as part of your Parents' Association Annual General Meeting if desired.

#### Internet safety workshops

The NCTE has developed a number of workshops for teachers on internet safety in

teaching and learning including a Teachers' Bebo Workshop. Further information on these workshops is available from your local education centre.

Workshops/support groups are typically two and half hours in duration and can take place in the education centre or in your school. Information on NCTE professional development activities can be accessed on [www.ncte.ie/ICTTraining/](http://www.ncte.ie/ICTTraining/).

*Note: All courses are fully funded by the NCTE.*

**Simon Grehan, National Centre for Technology in Education.**

## FÍS Film Festival

The National FÍS Film Festival took place on Thursday, 25 October 2007 in the Helix at Dublin City University with over 800 children and their teachers attending from across the country. The Irish star of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, Evanna Lynch, attended as a special guest. Over 25 awards were presented to schools and their students to celebrate their outstanding film achievements in moviemaking with particular acknowledgement in areas such as animation, acting, editing and direction.

This is the third year the Festival celebrates outstanding achievements by primary school children involved in the FÍS (Film In Schools) project. The FÍS project is an initiative designed to introduce the medium of film as a support to the Primary School Curriculum.

Commenting on the awards, Minister for Education and Science Mary Hanafin TD said, "Children from Dún Chaoin, Kerry, to Sligo and from Wexford to Louth and many schools in between have made films using the FÍS methodology. ...A special thanks to all the teachers involved in FÍS who have risen to the challenge by

providing such wonderful creative learning opportunities for their children."

As part of the curriculum for primary schools, children in over 100 primary schools throughout Ireland wrote, directed and produced their own 5-minute films. Their efforts were supported by the National Centre for Technology in Education that provided training in film making techniques and digital and film editing equipment. Regional screening events, many taking place at public cinemas, were organised by local Education Centres and generated huge excitement. From the 100 submitted films, 25 were selected for their acclaimed merits to participate at the FÍS Film Festival.

Anne White, National Coordinator with the NCTE said, "FÍS touches every nerve of the primary curriculum. It brings alive the immense creativity of children and their ability to apply the technology in a collaborative way in film making. It simply makes learning great fun."

For a list of winners in all categories or for further information visit [www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie) or [www.fis.ie](http://www.fis.ie).

**scoilnet**  
portal for irish education  
Irishúiríonn oideachais na hÉireann



Star site

**Scoil Bhreandain, Eachleim**  
[www.eachleim.com/](http://www.eachleim.com/)

Very clear and simple navigation. Content mostly in Gaelige and shows great use of images.



Star Site is part of Schools Online  
[www.scoilnet.ie/schoolsonline](http://www.scoilnet.ie/schoolsonline)

#### My favourite sites

**Judy Costelloe**  
A Learning support teacher at Scoil Eoin in Tralee.

**I Am An Artist**  
[www.iamanartist.ie](http://www.iamanartist.ie)  
Art activities, weblinks, factsheets and games. Irish website written by Irish teachers.



**NGA Kids!**  
[www.nga.gov/kids/kids.htm](http://www.nga.gov/kids/kids.htm)  
Explore images and see how they were made.

**Inside Art**  
<http://eduweb.com/insideart/>  
Great site for 'looking and responding to art'. Encourages pupils to ask the who, what, where and how.

#### Top 10 sites

The following are the most viewed Christmas-related websites on Scoilnet:

- The Christmas Themapage**  
[www.scoilnet.ie/articles/Christmasthemapage.aspx](http://www.scoilnet.ie/articles/Christmasthemapage.aspx)  
A one-stop-shop for information and activities on Christmas.
- Christmas Around the World**  
[www.the-north-pole.com/around/index.htm](http://www.the-north-pole.com/around/index.htm)  
Find out how people celebrate Christmas in other countries.
- Why Christmas**  
[www.whychristmas.com/](http://www.whychristmas.com/)  
Customs, cultures, the story and fun.
- Build A Snowman**  
<http://wakidsheart.com/holidays/christmas/snowman.htm>  
Choose the best outfit for your snowman.
- Christmas Lesson Plans**  
[www.lessonplanspage.com/Christmas.htm](http://www.lessonplanspage.com/Christmas.htm)  
Ideas for most subject areas.
- Christmas Carols**  
[www.carols.org.uk/](http://www.carols.org.uk/)  
Listen to the music and read the lyrics.
- Colouring.ws**  
[www.coloring.ws/christmas.htm](http://www.coloring.ws/christmas.htm)  
Print and colour activities.
- How Stuff Works**  
<http://www.howstuffworks.com/christmas.htm>  
Hundreds of questions answered.
- Clipart**  
<http://holidays.kaboose.com/xmas-clip.html>  
A collection of free clipart for use in your projects and worksheets.
- Nativity Play**  
[www.catholicireland.net/pages/index](http://www.catholicireland.net/pages/index)  
Contains full script for school play.