

Children protection against undesirable internet content

Business



Introduction The internet has delivered incalculable economic benefits in worldwide. This has been achieved through ensuring that almost every piece of information and content is available and accessible from anywhere.

However, the easy access of the internet has its downside on people's lives. Pornography is one of the most available internet content in the World Wide Web. With their natural curiosity and high technological skills, children have found themselves viewing these images.

There are individuals in the internet who tap the curiosity of children, to engage them mostly in sexually explicit conversations. Most of these people offer and sell child pornographic materials and images while some at the same time request for their online contacts. Therefore, it is necessary for guardians and parents to understand that children can be harassed through conversations, which are better known as " chat." Moreover, computer sex offenders can use internet to evaluate children they are in contact with for future harassment and face-to-face contact. It is also crucial for the parent to note that computer sex criminals can be of whichever age, gender, or even race and they cannot generalize their looks.

Normally, adolescents are the most curious children about sexuality and sexually explicit materials thus they are more likely to deviate away from parent controls. This happens as they seek to establish new relationships outside the family. They use their time when online to seek such materials and individuals due to curiosity. Most sex offenders will seek to exploit these characteristics. Either some online offenders who are of an age that is close to the child can be used to lure children to such online sites. Nonetheless,

these offenders are not considered dangerous as those of the other group (Livingstone & Bober, 2005).

Lack of a central point of internet control globally, regionally, or nationally has led to the emergence of millions of such websites. Industry players have suggested the use of device filters on personal computers rather than blocking the content at the network level. Either internet service providers can filter internet content at the whole internet network level. Nonetheless, this depends on the laws or practices of the individual countries. However, I feel that these device level filters do not offer sufficient protection to the online children. This is mainly due to the sudden increase of internet-enabled devices, which are easily accessible thus making protection arduous.

This situation is of considerable concern to parents and people who encounter children and young people. The proposal to have a mandatory censorship by the government would be difficult to enforce. I would propose the use of an opt-in system to protect children from undesirable internet content (Parliamentary inquiry, 2012). Signs that a Child is at Risk Online A child that spends most of time online and especially at night might be on the risk. Mostly these children spend their time in online chat rooms. They mostly chat with friends online, make new friends online, spend time, and to some extent seek sexual information and hence making them easier targets.

The other sign is when a parent locates pornographic materials with the child. This is because most offenders will supply children with these materials. If a child starts to receive phone calls from unfamiliar numbers, gifts from unfamiliar people and even mails from strangers. The child may

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start turning off the computer fast when someone enters the room, the child becomes withdrawn from the rest of the family, and the child uses an online account belonging to someone else. If a guardian or parent sees his/her child manifest these signs, necessary measures should be taken to protect the child (Livingstone & Bober, 2005).

Child Protection Measures Many people feel that the use of device level filters can help in protection of children against unwanted internet content. These devices are installed to control the internet content that can be accessed. I strongly feel that device level filters are not sufficient to offer protection to children when online. Furthermore, remarkably few parents use these devices. This is because these devices are hard to install and even to maintain besides lack of up-to-date internet education and information.

Therefore, I would strongly propose the use of an Opt-In system, which gives a freedom of choice to individuals to select the content they need to access. Opt-In System Internet service providers maintain this system. This allows delivery of clean internet feed to customers. Nevertheless, customers are supposed to choose whether to receive internet content. This would preserve consumers' choice through the provision of additional information that will act as content barrier to children from accessing age inappropriate content. This model emulates the system already being used by most mobile companies, where access to undesirable content is limited through an age verification check conducted by the network operator.

An opt-In model offers the best protection to children against unwanted adult content. Most mobile phone service providers who provide internet access,
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which has the age restriction set at 18 years. However, this model has several issues regarding its design and implementation, which require to be addressed, either a workable age verification interface and a granular system that permits households to maintain varying levels of access for the diverse members of the family. An Opt-In model is also efficient as there is no business, which has ever indicated that the model has a high cost. Either there are claims that the model slows down internet access speeds.

Despite all these, there is no model that can offer total protection of children and thus parents are advised to stay engaged in helping children stay online. These can be done through combining this model with education to children on the dangers on the internet. This is because children are easier prey and an educated child will understand better the steps taken to protect them. This is done through telling them why certain steps are taken to safeguard them. Either it should be explained to them that they should not reveal their personal information when online (Parliamentary inquiry, 2012).

Conclusion Online and internet communication are not always a positive encounter to many young people, and its benefits must be weighed against the problems posed. The World Wide Web is packed with several contents, which range from violent content and pornography. Sexual explicit material and information are the most available in the internet. Parents and guardians must look for every sign of risk that their children might be to take necessary measures. Installing device level filters is among some of the measures that can be adopted. However, the devices are cumbersome to install and maintain and hence their worthiness is lost.

I believe an Opt-In system coupled with education are the best measures to protect children against undesirable internet content.