

Newspaper report – bebo essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Recent reports have shown that recently every child that has access to the World Wide Web is a member of social networking sites. The main sites are Bebo & My-Space. In fact, 79% of secondary school children have been members of these chat sites from they started. Bebo was set up as a photo sharing site in January 2005, then turned to social networking later that year. It is thought to be the sixth biggest site in the UK, with 30million users worldwide. Parents have been given information about safety and the Child Protection laws, but this still doesn't stop the predators from signing on and terrorising our children online.

The popularity of these sites are getting so out of control; children are trying to sign on in school by using proxies to disguise their history, Head teacher Dr Patrick McGovern said: " We have tried to have them blocked, but nothing has happened". This implies jus how overpowering these sites are. " We have now put the matters in the hands of the police. It is an awful thing to spread a hate campaign, we take it very seriously. " Abusive comments about pupils at another school in Cornwall were removed this week from Bebo after intervention by police.

I recently took a questionnaire for feedback to give people an insight just out of a random sample of children, how many admitted to using these sites. The outcome showed that 9 out of the 10 children used the site everyday and found it useful to talk to their friends and it was enjoyable. 6/10 admitted to given personal information out to strangers and finally 4/10 said that they were addicted. There is also evidence that material posted on Bebo has been used to bully and harass both other students and occasionally teachers.

Michael Birch says Bebo takes privacy and safety “ very seriously”, “ We have a dedicated customer service centre, which we recently opened in Austin, Texas,” he said. “ We have 20 full-time people who respond to reports of abuse. “ We have safety tips on the website, we employ Dr H O’Connell, who is our chief safety officer and we’re working on a lot of initiatives to make Bebo as safe as it can be. ” The site, which gives young people their own web space, has become a huge hit with students in Ireland, in particular with children as young as 13 regularly visiting it.

But concerns have been raised in Northern Ireland by school principals and children’s charities that some people have been using fake identities to put pornography and sectarian literature on the site. Although these are relative newcomers to the web they both have proved themselves with over 1000 people on average joining each day. The analysis shows that Bebo users tend to be younger than those on its rival with 54% of Beboers aged under 18 compared to the estimated 31% on My-Space. The audience on Bebo tends to make more use of the site spending, on average, one hour and 52 minutes on the site every month.

On the other hand, My-Space members only one hour 28 minutes a month. Spokesperson from Both these parties said: “ Whenever we do find inappropriate content on, we look at how long it’s been there and I generally find it’s been there for less than 24 hours. ” We accept that Bebo & My-Space can’t prevent people creating fake identity accounts but our companies “ can respond as quickly as possible and take the appropriate action”. On sectarianism, they say that while Bebo is in favour of political

expression, it is totally opposed to hate crime. It also takes a strong line on “ pornography and cyber-bullying”.

But Michael Birch also says parents must accept that the internet is not going to go away and is here to stay, so they, too, must accept a role in policing what their children get up to. “ It’s important that parents actually understand what Bebo is, how to use it and they can work with their children and discuss it with their children. In the 13 months since it launched, Bebo has racked up more than 22 million members. It is aimed at those aged 13-30 but has proved particularly popular with school and college students. Two students gave me their honest opinion of what they thought of these sites. Sarah, 15 said; “ I love Bebo!

As soon as I return from school I sign on to Bebo, it’s great! And I don’t know why so many complaints have been said about this amazing site! It’s just the best”. Thomas, 14 said; “ My- Space is really boring. They rarely have any updates and it’s the same thing old thing day in day out. Bebo is exactly the same. The only thing I like about Bebo is that they respond to your reports and they deal with the problems u have with others.

Let’s face it, if they both want to keep their popularities, they would need more fun interesting stuff, and it’s the 21st Century for crying out loud” 1 in 5 children (5. million children) have received unwanted sexual solicitation in the past year. 20% (1-1. 5 million children) were “ very or extremely upset” about receiving such solicitations. 25% (5. 4 – 6. 4 million children) received “ unwanted exposure to pictorial images of naked people. 71% of “ unwanted exposures” occurred while the children were searching or surfing

the Internet. 67% of the unwanted exposures happened at home! Is this the kind of Act we wish to let our children experience, its up to you?