

Risks and benefits of children using the internet



INTRODUCTION

Technology tools such as radio, television, telephones, computers, and the Internet can provide access to knowledge in sectors such as entertainment, education and human rights, offering a new realm of choices that enable the person to improve their knowledge for future needs. The curiosity of the Internet makes children and young people to try to know or learn as much as possible about new things to be more advanced than adults in using the Internet. Optimists view the emergence of the Internet as a chance for democratic and community-based participation, for creativity, self-expression and play, and to enhance the expansion of knowledge, whereas pessimists lament the end of childhood, innocence, traditional values and authority (Livingstone, 2002)

Children are being described as the " ICT generation" or the computer generation in information and communication with this technology. Now, many children know more than or as much as their parents or teachers know about these technologies. This scenario shows that internet can be one of the tools to develop the children knowledge in this new urban life.

When a child has a project or homework to do, the internet is a portal to extensive amounts of information, a superb resource for children nowadays. There are many useful sources to be found, such as libraries, bookstores, news room and even virtual school. While the Internet is an amazing resource, parents have reasonable concerns about how they can secure a wholly beneficial Internet experience for the children.

There are few risks for children who use online services such as internet. Children are particularly at risk because they often use the computer unsupervised and because they are more likely than young people to participate in online discussions regarding companionship, relationships, or social activities. In another survey, it was disclosed that 9 out of 10 children and teenagers between 8-16 years old had seen pornographic websites accidentally while searching for information for their school home-works (Utusan Malaysia, 2005)

Maximizing the benefit of the internet for children may require more than just controlling what they have access to but to monitor how much time their child spends online, whom the child come in contact with online, and what is viewed. In a newspaper column, a journalist relates the flow of harmful information in the Internet with escalating numbers of murder and rape by young juveniles in the year 2003 in Malaysia (Abdul Malek, 2004).

Some solution can be implemented to balance the abundant educational value with the need for security and protection. Something entirely new is the idea of a web browser with filtering because children are anxious to explore cyberspace, so parents need to supervise their children and give them guidance about using the Internet. Filters can give parents and guardians a false sense of security to believe that children are protected when they are not around. However, did the use of this web filters provide more benefits in the development of knowledge or it just constrain for children learning process through internet.

For these such of reasons, the aim of this study is to examine the kind of monitor the children that participate in the activities by using web filter software and to know how the use give a significant or effect to development of children knowledge in learning process through internet. The underlying of these reasons also, there are several questions that need to be resolved in order to answer some questions that may arise in this paper:

1. Can be internet be beneficial to development of children knowledge?
2. Can we allowing the children to make full use of internet outweigh the risks of exposing to harmful or inappropriate content to them?
3. How dangerous exactly is the internet for unsupervised children?
4. Do the benefits of using web filter in controlling children activities through internet?
5. Is it practical/ necessary to monitor the availability of internet content to children?
6. Who should responsible for this?

Method

In this study also involved a survey aimed at obtaining a general view of the concern about the development of children's knowledge through the Internet. Target respondents for this paper is in an area of housing in urban areas of the Taman Bukit Kemuning, Section 32 Shah Alam that most residents here have the internet as a tool as one way of living.

The survey involved responses via questionnaire to be answered by the parents of 20 families who have children under the age of 6 to 17 years and have Internet service at home. This range of ages had been chose because most of children at these ages are fascinating in using internet seeking <https://assignbuster.com/risks-and-benefits-of-children-using-the-internet/>

materials or information for homework while they currently still study in school. Of the total respondents, 12 of which are made up by mothers and the rest are among fathers. From the survey results will conclude a few questions and the actual scenario happens and also about topics discussed through the feedback given by them.

Development of Children Knowledge through Internet

The participation of children and young people in the Internet is considered a positive development towards enhancing their educational skills and knowledge. This type of skills is more than accessing an online encyclopedia and looking up a subject. It is making use of sites that are designed specifically to help them with their homework. Some online services provide specific areas to assist with homework given by teachers, including the ability to send questions or homework problems through e-mail to the experts in that subject area and receive responses within seconds.

In Malaysia, the full support and encouragement from the Malaysian government to the use of ICT in schools can be seen from the development of Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and other programs related to ICT such as provide and increase the number of computer laboratories to facilitate schools in Malaysia whether in urban or rural areas(Syahirah, 2006).

A total of 70% of respondents said they provide Internet service at home is to facilities for their children to develop their learning process. Only 25% said it was for equipment for their own work and 5% were said to provide Internet services because it is considered a mandatory tool in every home today. This shows that parents today are also aware of the importance of the Internet as

a learning tool for children in exploring their knowledge to be more advanced than others.

Many of people communicate through e-mail with family and friends around the world and use the social network website and chat engine to make new friends who share common interests and children are not excluded.

The Potential Risks of the Internet on Children

The Internet has changed the way we communicate, learn and live by opening up our world to endless possibilities. The Internet has an amazing potential as a learning and communication tool, but it also contains hidden threats to the safety and well-being of children, including online gaming sites that can result in unhealthy addiction, cyber bullying and victimization through mobile phones that can bring about severe consequences to a child's self-confidence and personal development, as well as exploitative marketing that may have financial consequences on the child and his parents.

Another threat that may not be immediately obvious but is of great concern is the potential for children to be exposed to sexual harassment, exploitation and pornography through online chats and social networking sites. Children are also vulnerable as targets of fraudsters who try to gain knowledge about them to abuse, terrorize, blackmail, steal or even kidnap them.

Besides, they also expose to inappropriate and potentially dangerous contact. The predators may use the Internet to befriend vulnerable children and teens by pretending to be another child or a trustworthy adult, or by

playing on teens' desire for romance and adventure, and then trying to persuade kids to meet them in person.

The children are also potential risk by the cyber bullies. Most people play nice online, but some use the Internet to harass, belittle, or try to intimidate others. Attacks may range from name calling to physical threats and are rarely seen by parents.

Furthermore, the children are also invasion of their privacy and online fraud. Children may innocently share photographs or personal information about themselves or their families on personal Web pages, when playing games, or in registration forms. Such information could put children at risk from Internet thieves or child predators.

To counter these threats, parents and caregivers are primarily responsible for protecting their charges, by supervising their access to cyberspace, coaching children in personal safety and installing parental control software. Schools, public authorities, community groups, Internet service providers, media industries and regulatory bodies also have a responsibility to ensure that children are properly advised on the benefits and perils of cyberspace and equipped with the skills to safeguard themselves.

Web Filter to Monitor Child Safety on Internet

A Web filter is a program that can screen an incoming Web page to determine whether some or all of it should not be displayed to the user. The filter checks the origin or content of a Web page against a set of rules provided by company or person who has installed the Web filter. A Web filter allows an enterprise or individual user to block out pages from Web sites that

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are likely to include objectionable advertising, pornographic content, spyware, viruses, and other objectionable content. Vendors of Web filters claim that their products will reduce recreational Internet surfing among employees and secure networks from Web-based threats.

Web filters have been around since the early days of the Web and they can play an important role in preventing young children from accessing inappropriate content. But they're not a replacement for parental involvements.

Before installing and configuring a filter, parents need to decide if their child needs to have software controlling how they can use the Internet and, if so, how the filter should be configured. Filters can be a convenient way to keep young children from stumbling onto material that might gross them out or disturb them. Young children generally seek out a limited number of sites, but it's certainly possible for them to stumble onto inappropriate ones.

The Responsible Party of these Issues

Keeping children safe on the Internet is everyone's job. Parents need to stay in close touch with their kids as they explore the Internet. Teachers need to help students use the Internet appropriately and safely. Community groups, including libraries, after-school programs, and others should help educate the public about safe surfing. Kids and teens need to learn to take responsibility for their own behavior - with guidance from their families and communities. It's not at all uncommon for kids to know more about the Internet and computers than their parents or teachers. If that's the case in your home or classroom, don't despair. You can use this as an opportunity to

turn the tables by having your child teach you a thing or two about the Internet. Ask her where she likes to go on the Internet and what she thinks you might enjoy on the Net. Get your child to talk with you about what's good and not so good about his Internet experience. Also, no matter how Web-literate your kid is, you should still provide guidance. You can't automate good parenting.

Just as adults need to help kids stay safe, they also need to learn not to overreact when they find out a child or teenager has been exposed to inappropriate material or strayed from a rule. Whatever you do, don't blame or punish your child if he tells you about an uncomfortable online encounter. Your best strategy is to work with him, so you both can learn from what happened and figure out how to keep it from happening again.

The challenges posed by the Internet can be positive. Learning to make good choices on the Internet can serve young people well by helping them to think critically about the choices they will face. Today it's the Internet; tomorrow it may be deciding whether it's safe to get into the car of someone a teen meets at a party. Later it will be deciding whether a commercial offer really is "too good to be true" or whether it really makes sense to vote for a certain candidate or follow a spiritual guru. Learning how to make good choices is a skill that will last a lifetime.

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