THE INTERNET: IS IT SAFE OR UNSAFE FOR THE STUDENT?

by:
Bryan Behn D. Meriño
Teacher III, Mountain View Elementary School

The internet has revolutionized the way we access information, connect with people, and conduct business. It is a vast repository of knowledge and an integral part of our daily lives. However, as much as it is a valuable resource, the internet is also a very unsafe place. There are many risks associated with online activity, especially for young people who may be less aware of potential dangers. In this article, we will discuss how to help students use the internet safely for educational purposes.

The internet is often compared to a vast library, with information on every topic imaginable. However, unlike a traditional library, the internet does not have librarians or filters to ensure that the information is accurate or appropriate. Students can easily stumble upon false or misleading information, as well as content that is inappropriate or even harmful.

To help students use the internet safely, it is important to teach them how to evaluate the information they find online. This includes checking the source of the information, looking for bias or inaccuracies, and verifying the information with other sources. Students should also learn how to use search engines effectively, to find relevant and reliable sources of information.

Another important aspect of internet safety is protecting personal information. Students should be taught not to share personal information online, such as their full name, address, or phone number. They should also be cautious about clicking on links or downloading files, as these can contain viruses or other malicious software.

Parents and teachers can also take steps to protect students' online safety. This includes setting up parental controls on devices, monitoring internet usage, and restricting access to certain websites or apps like Facebook or other social networking websites. It is also important to have open and honest conversations with students about e-safety and potential risks of online activity.

In addition to these measures, there are many resources available to help students use the internet safely. There are websites and apps that provide age-appropriate content and filter out inappropriate material. The internet is a great teaching and learning medium, but it can pose a significant problem if not used safely. These can be related to:

• content (Young people who visit inappropriate websites)

• conduct (children posing as older than their real age; 'sexting' - the exchange of sexual messages or photographs, or uploading of images of other children online); and.

• contact (Using chat rooms or social networking platforms to target children).

Young people may find themselves in challenging, even dangerous situations if they are not educated about these risks.

There are also online safety courses and workshops that can teach students about internet safety and cyberbullying. It is imperative that teachers understand what to do in this situation. It's certainly worth asking the school administration about the e-safety policy, protocols, and who to call in case of an emergency. If there is no such policy, check for local child protection organizations that can assist in such cases. It is also helpful to discuss internet safety with parents, as many are unaware of the dangers.

The internet is a valuable resource for students, but it is also a very unsafe place. It is important to teach students how to use the internet safely and responsibly, and to provide them with the tools and resources they need to do so. By working together, we can help students make the most of the internet while staying safe and secure.

22 June 2023

References:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-help-young-learners-stay-safe-internet