

Building a Safety Net for The Internet

Follow these steps for guidance in making sure your teen uses digital technologies appropriately:

1. Keep the computer in a public space in the home and limit time spent online.
2. Perform technology audits. Regularly check Internet history and phone call/text messaging logs.
3. Use technology to strengthen your parent-teen relationship. Ask your teen to show you his or her online profile and decide whether you want to set up your own page on one of the social networking sites to stay in-the-know.

With the rise of social networking tools like Facebook and Twitter, it is no wonder teens are spending more hours online, subsequently creating a digital world of their own. While it might be difficult to keep up with all the latest online fads, parents can actively monitor their teens' Internet use to ensure their children are playing it safe.

Many teens say their parents are unaware of their online activities. Furthermore, nearly one third (29%) of students say their parents would disapprove if they knew what they were really doing on the Internet. It is important for parents to take the time to learn about the many online dangers teens are exposed to on a regular basis to effectively keep them out of harm's way.

Take the teens and technology crash course for parents (see below).

Crash Course for Parents: Generation M: Teens and Technology

Digital Technology 101 offers guidance and advice on how to monitor some of the most popular communication tools used by teens today. You may have heard about them on television news or relented to your teen's wishes to buy the latest and greatest gadgets. But have you had an opportunity to learn exactly what your teen already knows about digital technologies?

Social Networking

Social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook are popular online hot spots where many teens spend an enormous amount of time. Find out why teens are so hooked to this new style of "hanging out" and what you can do to help them steer clear of trouble.

Cell Phones

The latest cell phone models enable teens to stay in touch with friends and family through more than just a phone call. However, many parents don't understand these newer technologies, allowing their teens free rein over a potentially dangerous medium.

Music and Online Videos

Do you know what videos your kids are watching online? Have you listened to the lyrics of the songs they are downloading? Your teens may be safe at home when they are surfing online, but the messages they are getting might have more influence than you realize.