Mobile is at the heart of family

New research shows that the majority of UK parents and children believe their family relationships are enhanced by mobile

Mobiles are now firmly woven into the fabric of modern family life — so much so that 75% of under-18s feel their relationships with their parents, siblings and other relatives are much closer thanks to these smart devices. And, according to the latest research from Vodafone, 89% believe mobile technology has helped them to get along better with friends as well.

There are other benefits, with 50% of teenagers feeling more empowered to express themselves through technology — girls in particular say they are more confident texting or using online messaging than talking face to face.

The sense of security provided by their mobile is almost universal among teenagers too: 95% report that they feel safer leaving the house with their phone, mainly so they can call parents if they have a problem. One in five parents feel the same way, saying they wouldn't let their child leave the house without a phone.

In fact, the mobile has earned such a special place in teenagers' hearts that one in three say their mobile phone would be the one thing they'd save if their house was on fire.

When looking to the future, the differing views of parents and children is clear, with 63% of all the children surveyed admitting they are "looking forward to a time when all I need to carry is my phone". The majority of parents, however, are still to be convinced. Just 34% of mums and dads can envisage "a future where mobile phones do everything".

Teens are also having the last laugh. They can't conceive of a life before the smartphone, with 50% of 16- to 18-year-olds admitting to feeling sorry for the dull lives their parents probably led in a pre-mobile world. "Our parents must have had a really boring time without mobile phones to entertain them," said one empathetic adolescent.

> **"Our parents must have had a really boring time without mobile phones to entertain them"**
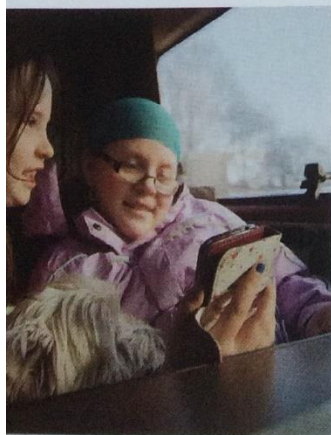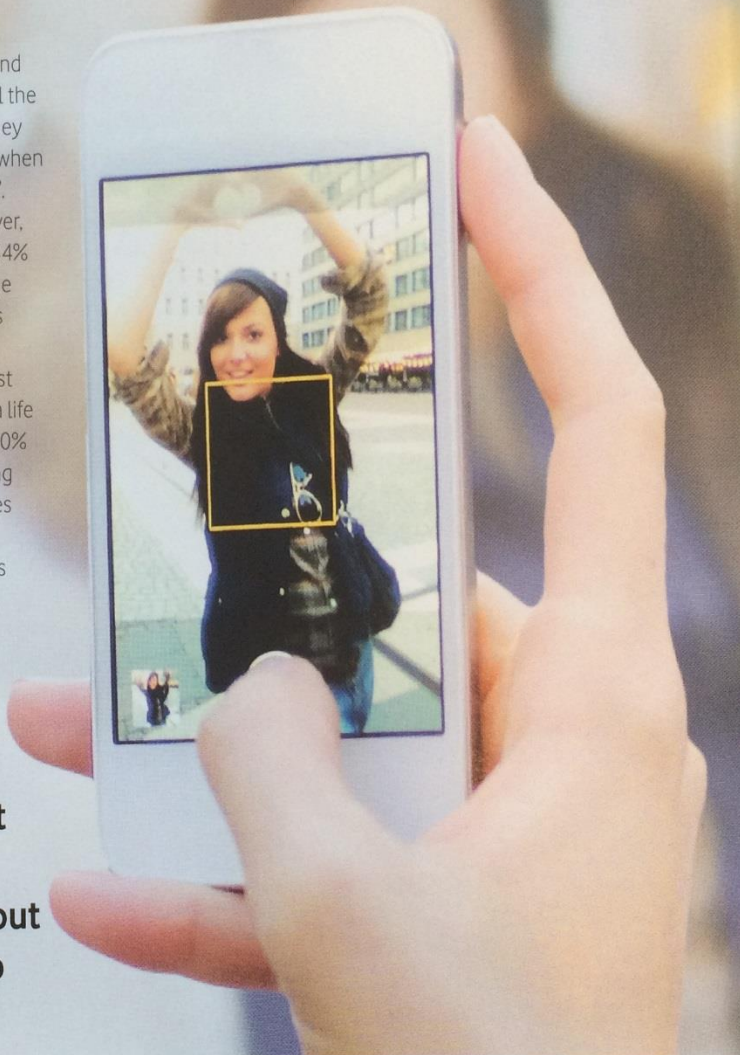
Digital media boosts children's reading age by 2.4 years

Technology is encouraging children to tackle more challenging books, according to recent research carried out by the University of Dundee for the *What Kids are Reading* report.

Renaissance Learning, which compiled the report from the reading habits of more than 426,000 children, found that books were no longer 'stand-alone products'. Instead, children are experiencing stories in multiple channels, with the top 10 dominated by titles from the Harry Potter series and *The Hunger Games*, which have been adapted into films, games or apps.

Finding out about stories from different sources is inspiring children to try more difficult reads too. The report found that five- to 10-year-olds in particular are enjoying books 2.4 years above their reading age. Professor Keith Topping, at the School of Education, University of Dundee, who carried out the research, says: "It is wonderful what reading highly motivating books does for children. For years one-to-five, children are reading favourite books at far above their chronological ability, but are still maintaining a high rate of success."

Create your own family IT policy

Some age-appropriate action plans to keep children safe online

	Under 5	6-9	10-12	13+
The big issues	Create boundaries and rules for the amount of time your son or daughter can spend online. It's never too early to start putting limits in place.	Compile a list of websites they're allowed to visit, and make sure they know why some websites are safer than others.	Discuss online privacy and the information they shouldn't share as they use the internet increasingly for homework and socialising.	Explain the pros and cons of Facebook now they have reached the age at which they can sign up for an account.
The basics	Choose an appropriate homepage on your family computer or tablet – for example, **bbc.co.uk/cbeebies**	Set parental controls on internet browsers by creating a user account for your child with appropriate settings. Check out Google's **safesearchkids.org** for stress-free browsing.	Make rules for the length of time they can spend on games consoles, tablets and smartphones, as well as the computer.	Agree a budget for things like apps and music. Giving them control of their own spending money can be useful, but make sure your kids know how to manage their money responsibly.
Worth checking	The educational apps, games and TV shows on offer for pre-school children, and the age ratings and descriptions for them.	Online virtual worlds for children of this age, such as Disney's **clubpenguin.com** and **moshimonsters.com/parents**	The kind of language and acronyms used by children in chat rooms. Make sure you know what to look out for. Head to **netlingo.com** for help demystifying cryptic teenspeak.	Facebook's online privacy settings and how commenting and photo sharing work. Set up your own account to get a feel for it or go to **facebook.com/safety**
Talk it through	Share your technology rules with grandparents, babysitters and older siblings, so that they stick to them when they look after your child or use the family computer.	Discuss the benefits and limitations of using the web to help with homework and other school work.	Give the reasons behind boundaries, time limits and parental controls, and be prepared to start re-evaluating the restrictions in line with your child's maturity.	Explain the dangers of sharing pictures and personal details online. And don't shy away from difficult subjects such as pornography, bullying and sexting. Childline's website can help: **childline.org.uk/explore/bullying**
And finally...	The rules and conversations you have now will set the tone for your child's internet use as they get older.	Other parents at your child's school are a source of information. Chat to them about how they help their children manage the digital world, and make sure you're all on the same page.	Tablets and games consoles shouldn't become a regular 'babysitter'.	Technology will be second nature to your child by now. Try to stay up to date with new technology, social networks and websites. **Techmums.co** is full of useful information.

The power of play

From problem-solving to conflict resolution, video games are a great way for kids to develop core skills

O nce the preserve of testosterone-fuelled teenage boys obsessed with shooting everything that moved on their computer monitors, video games now have universal appeal.

Driven by the popularity of consoles and mobile devices, everyone from toddlers and teens to parents and grandparents are spending sizeable chunks of time exploring virtual worlds.

And, played in moderation, it seems they're not bad for us either. A decade-long study of 11,000 UK children, recently published in the *British Medical Journal*, found that playing video games from as young as five years old doesn't lead to behavioural, attention or emotional problems later in life.

In fact, research suggests that video games can be a force for good – improving kids' spatial awareness and problem-solving skills, as well as boosting their creativity. And their potential applications as an educational tool are attracting serious interest in the UK and abroad too – not least from schools.

Learning through play

As educators look to combat student apathy by incorporating play into their lesson plans, game-based learning is taking off and blockbuster titles are making an appearance in classrooms. The open-world phenomenon *Minecraft*, which

has no obvious goal other than using three-dimensional blocks to build structures, has sold more than 35 million copies globally across both console and mobile platforms. And gamers have used it to re-create, in the most painstaking detail, everything from the continent of Westeros in TV's *Game of Thrones* to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Teachers Santeri Koivisto and Joel Levin recognised how the game could be modified for deployment in schools, and set up MinecraftEdu to make it a reality. Koivisto believes the model for educational games is broken, and that the best approach is simply to engage kids better.

"Games create interest, and interest creates engagement," he says. "Students who are concentrating absorb more information, faster. They share it and expand what they understand. Using games like this, with an open mind, makes school more conversational. Many parents would rather see their kids creating cool structures and figuring out programming in *Minecraft* than popping heads in *Call of Duty*."

Teacher Allen Heard, of Ysgol Bryn Elian school in North Wales, has been using MinecraftEdu for around 18 months, and agrees with Koivisto. He noticed that pupils who play the game have, for example, become much better at conflict

resolution. "By using *Minecraft*, students are improving their problem-solving skills, communication skills and collaborative working – and they're showing respect for the virtual worlds their friends have built.

"For me, *Minecraft* is the best 'hook' you could possibly have. If you say, 'today, kids, we're going to look at X using *Minecraft*', a loud cheer erupts across the room. They're learning through play, and it's learning that sticks with them."

Inspiring the next generation

Introducing online play in the classroom is more than just a handy study aid, though. Game-based learning could also inspire the next generation of game designers, and give children a leg-up when it comes to vital 21st-century skills.

Little Big Planet is a puzzle-based platform game published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE). The point of the game is to navigate cute mascot Sackboy through all of the levels – you have the ability to create your own levels, too. And the Little Big Planet EDU project has seen teachers use the game's level creator for subjects as varied as science, technology, engineering, art and maths.

Barlow's Primary School in Merseyside has even used it to bring Anthony Horowitz's bestselling

Stormbreaker novel to life, coding levels that would help to develop the protagonist's skills. Deputy head at Barlow's, Stacey Feenan, said the project was a revelation in game-based learning: "It has enabled pupils to develop programming, logic, teamwork and problem-solving skills, while having fun. They've seen their games console in a whole new light, discovering the science behind the play. In a world where students are on the lookout for the next big thing in technology, this game allows them to be the next big thing themselves, through exciting creation and logic tools."

Dr Maria Stukoff, Head of Academic Development at SCEE, also believes that game-based technologies have much to offer in terms of child development. "Future-fit skills such as programming, art and design, 3D world-building and dealing with challenges help develop critical thinking – these are skillsets that will be required from our future workforce in engineering, science and the creative industries," she says.

It's not a case of games making children smarter – more that using them in a classroom environment can change young people's attitudes towards what's being taught, focus their attention and open up other avenues of creativity. So before you tell your child to switch their console off, or put their tablet away, consider the good that the

time they spend with games could be doing for their future skills.

Adapting technology to aid lives

Beyond education, games can help to improve kids' quality of life too. SpecialEffect is a UK charity that modifies equipment and consoles to level the gaming playing field for people with disabilities – and help them enjoy the inclusivity, competitiveness and fun of video games. Personalised technology brings to life the gaming experience – and enables them to interact and socialise with friends and family in a way that we tend to take for granted.

"Although our primary focus is on helping people benefit from the fun and inclusivity through video games, there's often a wider impact to our work," says charity spokesperson, Mark Saville. "Erin is a girl with severe disabilities who is using an eye-gaze system to play music, paint pictures and turn the pages of an onscreen book. Then there's Rob, a young man who had a car accident that left him quadriplegic just days before he was due to go to York University last year. Using the eye-gaze system that we've lent him, he can type and access the internet, and he's just been offered an unconditional place at Bristol University."

That's GR8 M8 ;-)

It's fast, free and kids can't get enough of it. Here's how to use IM smartly and still have fun

Joanne Mallon
Founder of
Kids' Blog Club and
MediaWomenUK

Everybody's using instant messaging (IM) these days, my 13-year-old daughter tells me with that familiar teenage roll of her eyes. For those of you not in the know, instant messaging is a blend of email, webcam or chat that you can send to someone in real-time via the internet.

Whilst you can IM via computer or tablet, the channel of choice for modern teens is the smartphone. According to research advisory firm mobileYouth, 78% of teenagers now use IM to plan their social lives.

So what do teens use IM for?
Children love sharing their lives in a visible way, more often than not they'll be sending a funny link, a video or a picture, and the apps that allow this to happen are a cheap, easy way to do it.

Mother of three, Holly Seddon, editor-in-chief of parenting and technology community Quib.ly, sees huge benefits to using IM.

"My 12-year-old daughter Mia uses instant messaging to stay in touch with me when she's at her father's house — he has very poor reception. She chats to her dad over Kik Messenger when she's at home, and he is far more a part of her daily life as a result."

Different medium, same rules
"Instant messaging has been around for a long time in various forms," says Dan Raisbeck, co-founder of anti-bullying charity, Cybersmile.org.

"My daughter's friends were caught out by Snapchat — someone had taken a screenshot and sent it to their friends"

"Your child is no more at risk than they would be on any other form of social media, so the same sort of rules apply," he adds.

In many chat apps, for example, the privacy settings will be off by default and it's up to the user to create privacy settings they're happy with. There are also some basic rules to talk to your child about, such as not using their real name on a public profile, never adding a location to messages or photos, and never accepting a follower or friend whom they don't know in real life.

Take a second before you send
Lunchboxworld.co.uk founder and mum of three, Caroline Job, has an additional family IM-ing rule called the 'red face test'. "The aim is to get kids to stop and think before they send. Some of my daughter's friends have been caught out by Snapchat. They were snapping inappropriate shots, thinking they'll be automatically deleted."

They then discovered someone had taken a screenshot and sent it to their friends."

IM-ing may feel like a private chat but it's not. Children write and respond fast and the acronyms and emoticons they use can lead to miscommunications and the wrong people viewing messages.

"What's important," says Dan Raisbeck, "is that parents understand what tech and apps their children are using and always keep talking and listening, both online and offline."

7 instant messaging safety tips

1 Choose a non-identifiable, non-gender specific screen name — and keep it clean.

2 Avoid giving out personal details, such as your real name or email address.

3 Don't accept files or downloads from people you don't know, including URLs.

4 Be extra careful with any contact request from friends of friends.

5 Never arrange to meet someone offline that you only know through IM conversations.

6 Learn how to save copies of your IM conversations.

7 Don't send mean IM messages or incite others to either.

Popular IM apps and services

BlackBerry® Messenger
Lets users message each other for free. Unlike normal texts, BBM messages can be sent to lots of people at once, allowing large group conversations.

Snapchat
Free photo-sharing app where users decide how long the image will live (1-10 seconds) after it's viewed. This doesn't mean it can't be captured by taking a screenshot! You can only share with friends and you have to be 13 or over to use it.

Ask.fm
A social network where people can ask each other questions, anonymously. You can change your settings so people can't ask questions without identifying themselves. There's a 'report' abuse button. Children must be over 13 to use it.

Sticks and stones

...are no longer a bully's weapon of choice, says top mummy blogger Tara Cain. Today's taunts are digital

Our children are digital natives. Technology is part of their everyday lives. And the benefits it brings are well documented – from developing IT skills and providing a quick and easy way to research school projects, to allowing them to communicate globally and access exciting sources of entertainment.

But new tech has a darker side. "Trolls who send abusive messages to anyone they take an instant and often irrational dislike to are now as established on the online scene as they once were in fairy tales," says Jane Wakefield, BBC's technology reporter.

Last year, the number of children contacting ChildLine about being bullied online rose by 87%. The charity BeatBullying estimates that one in three young people in the UK is a victim of cyberbullying. And that 3% of that number have attempted suicide.

What are the effects of cyberbullying?

In the 'real' world, bullying was once confined to the playground. In its new online form, cyberbullying can be carried out through social media sites, texts, websites or instant messaging, and can present itself in upsetting or threatening messages, rumours or embarrassing photos or videos posted online.

Because children can access these channels 24/7, the victim can often feel there is no escape.

"Cyberbullying increases isolation and impacts on mental health more than other forms of bullying," explains Luke Roberts, National Co-ordinator of the UK's Anti-Bullying Alliance. Read any anti-bullying website and it lists the same potential effects, including depression, destroyed confidence, isolation, self harming, and a reduced sense of security.

According to psychologist and author, Dr Terri Apter: "Some children are able to ignore online bullying, but most take it very personally, and are haunted by these anonymous and vicious expressions of ridicule and disdain. Not knowing the source, they may feel distrustful of anyone who might be – or is colluding with – the bully, and hence they withdraw from a wide circle of friends. The combination of anonymity with direct communication is highly unsettling."

Amy-Louise Paul knows these feelings well. After a disagreement with a school friend, the then 13-year-old faced a tirade of online hatred. Her tormentors set up a Facebook group called 'We Hate Amy-Louise. For all those people who hoped she was dead already'.

"I didn't believe it at first. Then, when I realised it was true, I was shocked," Amy-Louise says. "I didn't want to talk to anyone. I cut myself off from my family. I'd loved school but started to dread going. But then it followed me home. I'd be worried someone would say something while I was online. It invaded everywhere." →

7 ways to help your child if they're being bullied

1 Let them share their concerns and what they want to happen.

2 Take their concerns seriously, while trying to remain calm.

3 Try not to attribute blame, even if your child has done something you advised them not to.

4 Report and take action to address the cyberbullying. Save any messages as proof, take screenshots of private messages – and don't delete anything.

5 Take action to prevent further bullying: remove the bully from friends lists, set your child's profile to private, if it isn't already, and block any offending phone numbers.

6 If the bully is someone at school, talk to a teacher or the headteacher and find out what their anti-bullying policy is.

7 Remain sensitive to your child's feelings. So, for instance, don't indefinitely ban their use of all internet-enabled devices.

Please note: much of the advice here was created in consultation with the NSPCC Participation Unit, speaking directly with children and young people about how to tackle cyberbullying.

Even after her cyberbully was made to take the Facebook page down in front of the headteacher, there was no escape for Amy-Louise. "People were still talking about it. I felt suicidal and told my mum I didn't want to be here anymore. That really scared her, so she encouraged me to contact ChildLine. I found talking to them easier than speaking to someone I knew. I was able to go at my own pace. They gave me advice on how to get through it and helped me speak to my family again too. I'm at college now and am coming to terms with what happened. But I know ChildLine are always there if I need them," Amy-Louise says.

Tackling the taunters

According to statistics, girls are twice as likely as boys to fall victim to or to perpetrate cyberbullying. Research also shows that those with special needs, in receipt of school meals or from minority groups are at risk too. But only one in 10 victims of cyberbullying will tell a parent or trusted adult of their abuse – so what can parents do to reduce the chances of their child being affected?

David Elstone, headteacher at Hymers College in Hull, thinks parents need to be educated about what is happening in the digital space. "A huge number of parents just don't understand today's digital world. And because [of that], they can't teach their kids how to use it appropriately."

Anthony Smythe, Managing Director of BeatBullying, says parents must explain to children how to enjoy the internet safely.

"We found that more than a quarter of 12- to 16-year-olds had witnessed bullying online, but only half did something about it." He advises children being bullied online, to "save and print out bullying messages or pictures they receive, noting dates and times. They should never respond or retaliate, as this can make things

worse. Instead, they should block the users sending the messages.

"One in five children think being bullied online is part of life. It doesn't have to be that way. Young people should always report anything abusive they see online to the site concerned. Flag it, report it, and talk to someone about it."

Resources

The Diana Award runs a national anti-bullying programme, training young people to stay safe on- and offline. **diana-award.org.uk/news-events/stay-safe-in-cyberspace**

NSPCC has trained counsellors available alongside advice pages for parents. **nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety** or call free on **0808 800 5000**

ChildLine allows children to email, chat online or post to its message boards. It's free, private and confidential with advice on how to report bullying. **childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx** or call **0800 1111**

facebook.com/safety/bullying Tips to help those affected by bullying stand up for each other.

anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk is a coalition of organisations and individuals that works together to stop bullying. It supports a network of schools and colleges and coordinates Anti-Bullying Week.

Vodafone Guardian can help with bullying as it lets you reject messages from particular numbers (**see page 4** for details).

What to do if your child is the bully

Young people who have never bullied anyone in real life could be drawn into cyberbullying because they think they are anonymous. They may do or say things they wouldn't dream of doing face-to-face, because they're hiding behind a screen.

They might succumb to peer pressure and pass on a bullying email or join in a conversation on a social media site without thinking of the consequences.

And, like all bullies, cyberbullies rely on others to endorse their behaviour, join in or simply not challenge them.

Cyberbullying can also be aimed at adults they want to ridicule or upset – for example, teachers.

If you think your child could be bullying someone

1 Talk to them openly about what they are doing and why it is unacceptable.

2 Listen to what they say – they may genuinely not understand the effect they are having on someone else or that what they are doing is bullying.

3 Try to find out why they started bullying someone in the first place. They may be trying to impress a new group of friends or may themselves be the victim of bullying.

4 Be proactive and talk to their teacher if necessary – assure the school you are working with them to prevent it from happening again.

5 If someone accuses your child of cyberbullying, listen to their concerns. Your first reaction may be to defend your child, but you must remain calm, promise to speak to your child, and get back to them straight away.

6 If they have been bullying someone, accept that your child can make mistakes, take action and find a way to move on. Ignoring the problem will mean your child is likely to bully again.

7 Implement consequences by limiting internet time or taking their device away. Explain what you expect of them in order to regain your trust and the use of their device.
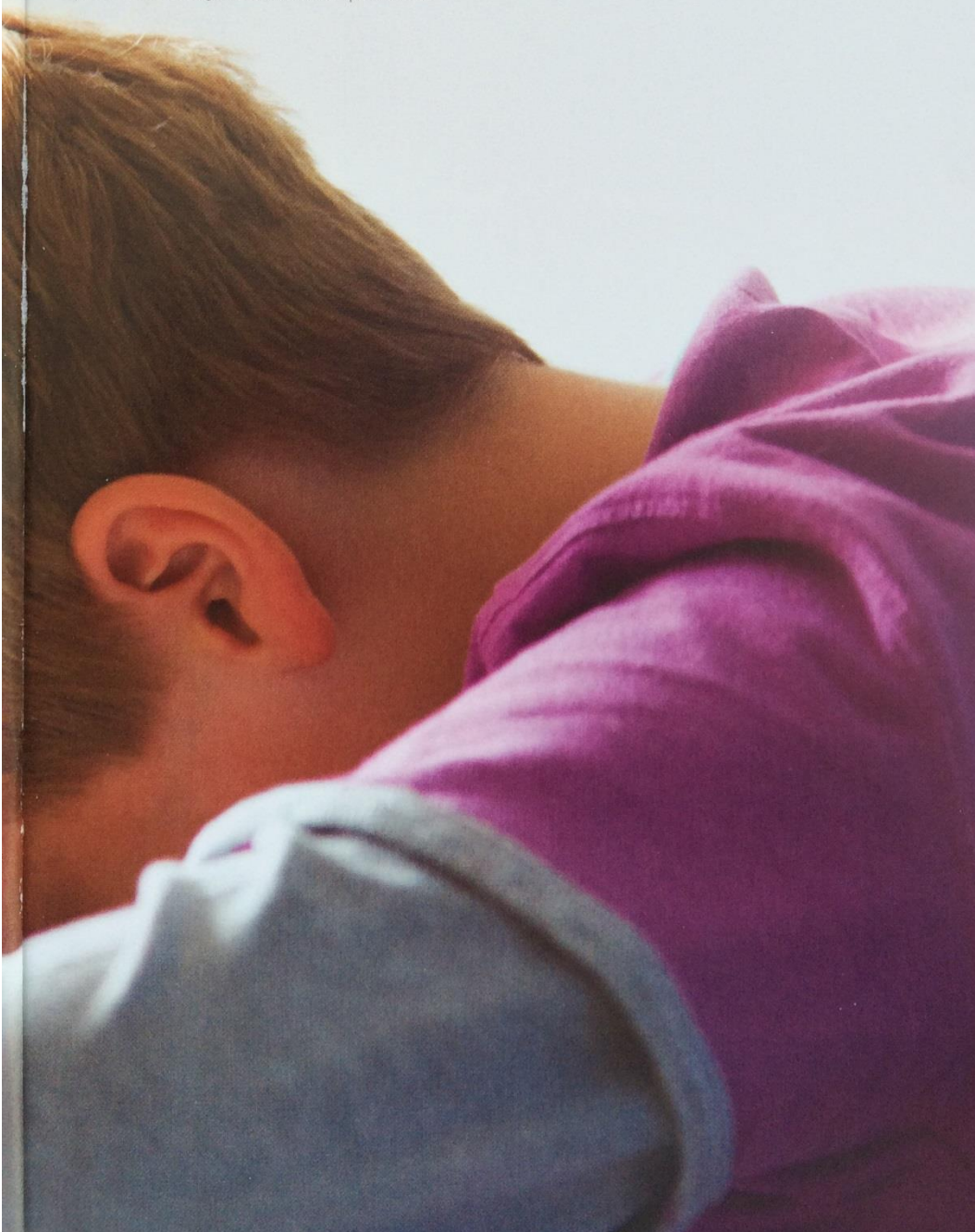
Stranger danger

Online grooming is rare, but it does happen. Louise Chunn, founder of welldoing.org, explores how to guard against and report suspect behaviour

No matter how hard you try, as a parent you can struggle to keep up with the lightning speed of technological change – whether it's the feeling that you have to change your gadgets with ever-increasing frequency or, more critically, that your children know much more than you do. How can you hope to protect them from what you may not even understand?

According to recent intelligence from the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command, the methods paedophiles now use to make contact with children have changed from when most of us were young. Once, those who sought to sexually exploit children would take a slow, tactical approach – say, entering a profession where children were encouraged to trust adults, such as teaching or social work. Now it's far more immediate and technology makes that possible.

Gain your child's confidence

It works like this: abusers contact young people online, sometimes disguising their identity, and try to entice them to swap images or communicate about sex online. They might be using social media, in a chatroom or in a multiplayer game, but often they will try to lure the young person somewhere more private. If they do manage to get a sexualised image from a child, they will use it to blackmail the child into further sexual acts or even self-harm captured on webcam. And if the child won't co-operate? Then they threaten to send the original image to the child's friends and family.

Research by EU Kids Online shows that just under a third of children in the UK have had contact online with people they hadn't met before. CEOP is also getting around 1,600 reports a month, as extortion is becoming more common. This doesn't mean that the internet is inherently dangerous for your children, but it does mean that you ought to take the situation seriously. You may not have the technical know-how to stop such people in their tracks, but you can arm your children with the necessary skills for sniffing out suspect behaviour.

Agree the limits

Removing all digital devices is not an option. For teens and tweens, phones and computers signal independence and, most importantly, keep them in contact with friends. Taking them away is likely to backfire.

Jonathan Baggaley, Head of Education at CEOP, advises that parents seek to guide their children. "Young people need to understand that there are some areas – such as sex – that are not safe to talk about online. They need to know what is appropriate and what is not. Parents need to have a conversation with their children to agree the limits of sensible behaviour."

Notice the warning signs

Children don't always understand that people can pretend to be who they're not online. They should also be warned against anyone who, from the beginning, is excessively attentive and flattering, especially about their appearance and 'sexiness'.

"Children being groomed by online predators often undergo subtle behavioural changes," says Baggaley. "They may become secretive about who they are talking to and where they conduct their online conversations. In the real world we treat strangers with caution. Similar care should be given to your child's new online 'friends'."

Remember to communicate

Show an interest in what your children do online, who their friends are and what sites they visit. Young people can see things in extremes, but even in serious circumstances, with help from the police, it is never too late, and the situation is never hopeless.

Illustrations: Robin Davey

Catfish: a person who pretends to be somebody else on social media
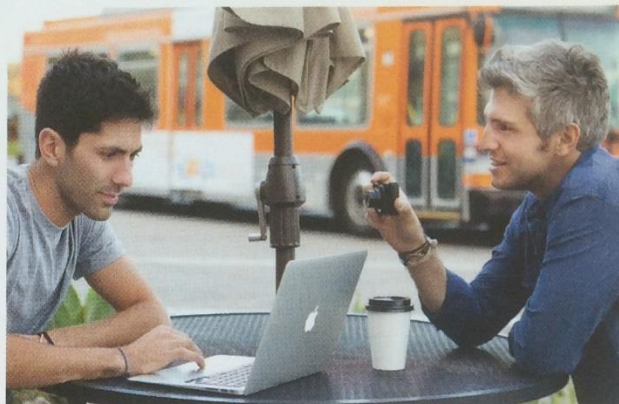
Nev Schulman and Max Joseph, makers of MTV's docudrama, *Catfish*, share their tips on how to spot a fake online profile

Check Facebook pages
If you've met a person online, look at their Facebook page and see how real they seem. Do they know the people posting on their wall? Or do they seem to be internet acquaintances? Check how many friends they have. A few friends (under 100) means it's either a new profile or a fake one. An excessive number of friends is a red flag too.

Investigate their photos
Has the person posted lots of photos of themselves? If they have, are the people in the pictures tagged? If so, and you follow the tag, does it lead to profiles for people who seem real? If their pictures aren't tagged, the person probably doesn't know the other individuals – or it's not them in the photos. If their photos seem to be all professional or publicity shots, they could be fake. Ask for proof. If you've met a person online, ask him or her to take a photo holding up something specific, like a daily newspaper or driver's licence. If they won't do this, it's suspicious.

Beware of extravagance…
Keep an eye out for anyone with a super glamorous career. Catfishes love to say they're models. If the person you're talking to online seems to live an extravagant lifestyle with private jets and famous friends, that's an alarm bell right there.

…and too much drama
It's a warning sign if the person you're talking to has a lot of intense drama in their life – for example, car crashes, terminal diseases and deaths in the family. Often, the catfish will use tragic situations as a way to elicit sympathy and prevent the other person from asking too many questions.

Ask to live chat via webcam
The biggest red flag is if the person you're talking to is reluctant to live chat via webcam, FaceTime, Skype or Google Hangout. Most computers, laptops and phones have cameras built in. If the person you're talking to claims they don't have a webcam, suggest they find one. If they won't prove they are who they say, they're not that person.

If it seems too good to be true, it probably is
Bottom line: do your research and use common sense. Google the person – be persistent and search for at least 30 minutes. Make them earn trust before revealing too much.
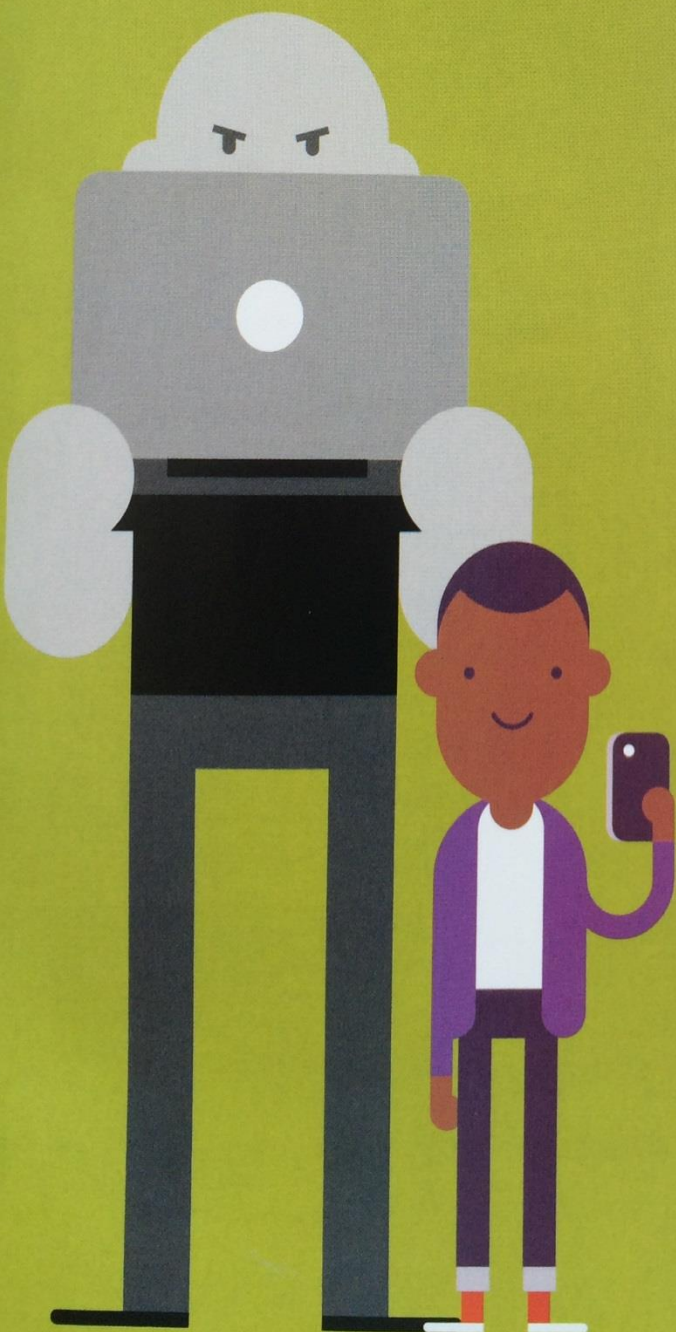
Manage your child's playtime

Today, video games are as much a part of growing up as TV. Here are a few tips to take charge of what your kids can access

Xbox 360

Set a Console Safety Passcode
1 Go to 'Settings' and select 'Family'.
2 Set 'Console Safety' to 'On' and you'll be asked to enter a four-digit passcode via the controller.
3 Save and exit.

Restrict games
1 Go to 'Settings', then select 'Family'.
2 Click 'Ratings and Content'.
3 Set the game rating of your choice: Early Childhood, Everyone, Everyone 10+, Teen, Mature, Adults Only.
4 Save and exit.

Set a Family Timer
1 Go to 'Settings' then select 'Family'.
2 Set 'Console Safety' to 'On' and enter your passcode.
3 Toggle 'Family Timer' to 'Daily' or 'Weekly'.
4 Use the left stick to select a time period.
5 Select 'Continue', then save and exit.
**6** The console warns players when they're coming to the end of their allowed time.

Customise Xbox Live online safety and privacy settings
1 Go to 'Settings', then select 'Family'.
2 Select the account you want to manage, then click 'Online Safety'.
3 Choose 'Change Settings' to customise the features your child can use. This includes friend requests, video communications and web browsing.

Wii

Choose an age rating
1 From the Wii menu screen go to 'Wii Options' then 'Wii Settings'.
2 Click the blue arrow on the right to access 'Wii System Settings 2'.
3 Select 'Parental Controls' then 'Yes' to activate.
4 You'll need to set a four-digit PIN, and a security question. Follow the prompts and click 'OK'.
5 Go to 'Game Settings' and 'PIN' and choose 'Highest Game Setting Allowed'.
6 Use the up and down arrows to the right of the screen to choose which age rating you want for your Wii without needing a PIN.
7 Select 'OK' then 'Confirm' to save your settings. Your Wii will now only play games of the rating you have set, and anything higher will require the PIN.
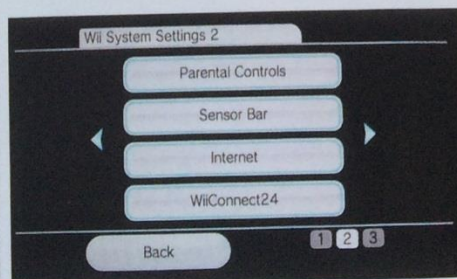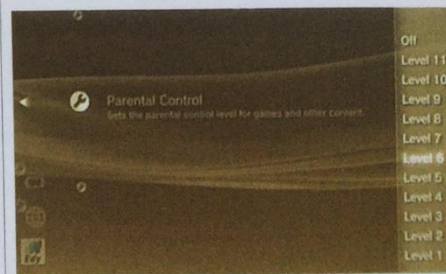
PlayStation 3

Restrict game content
1 Go to 'Settings' then scroll to 'Security Settings'.
2 The default password is 0000 but you can change this under the 'Change Password' option by following the on-screen instructions.
3 Select 'Parental Controls'; enter your password.
4 You can now choose the game content you're comfortable letting your family access. The lower the number, the stricter the settings:

  2 – Early Childhood
  3 – Everyone
  4 – Everyone 10 and up
  5 – Teen
  9 – Mature
  10 – Adults Only

5 From 'Parental Controls' you can also block access to online play by toggling 'Internet Browser Start Control' to 'On'.

Parents can also create sub-accounts for younger users, which gives them the option to block access to features such as web browsing.

Wii System Settings 2

Parental Controls

Sensor Bar

Internet

WiiConnect24

Back

1 2 3

Parental Control
Sets the parental control level for games and other content

Off
Level 11
Level 10
Level 9
Level 8
Level 7
Level 6
Level 5
Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1

Make social networking safer

Social media sites let teens socialise online. Here's how to review privacy settings for your peace of mind

Facebook

This guide will take you through the basic security and privacy settings you need to protect your teenager when they are using the internet browser-based version of Facebook.

Facebook is also available as a mobile app for Android and iOS devices, and the privacy settings are dictated by how you set up your teen's Facebook account on the computer. If you alter your privacy settings, the change is universal and will affect how people view your teen's Facebook via the app or on the website.

### 5 simple steps to making Facebook safe for your teen

1 Ask your teenager to log in using their email address and password. Click the cog at the top right corner of their newsfeed page to access 'Settings'.
2 The 'Privacy' page lets you control who can see and find your teen's posts. Select 'Who Can Contact Me?' to restrict who can befriend your teen or make friend requests.
3 Use the 'Blocking' setting to block invites, users and app requests. You can also create a 'restricted' list. Users you have selected to be on this list will only be able to see a very limited version of your teen's profile.
4 'Timeline and Tagging' will help you to control the photos and posts your teen is tagged in. You can manage who can post

on their timeline, who can see their timeline and what happens when they are tagged in a post. To check how others see your teen's timeline, go to their Facebook page and click on the down arrow situated beside the 'Activity Log' bar. Click on 'View As', type in a name from your teen's friends list and you'll see how their profile appears to that specific friend.
**5** The Apps setting will let you control what information gets shared through games and apps such as Farmville or Candy Crush. You can also block invites to download apps or play games from specific users here.

Remember...

1 You need to be over 13 to have a Facebook account.
2 Facebook is a public platform. If your teen removes a post or photo they are tagged in from their timeline, it will still be visible elsewhere on the site.
3 You can use the 'Report' button (on the drop down menu to the right of every post) to report offensive content to Facebook.
4 For more help and information, check out Facebook's Parents' Centre at **facebook.com/safety**
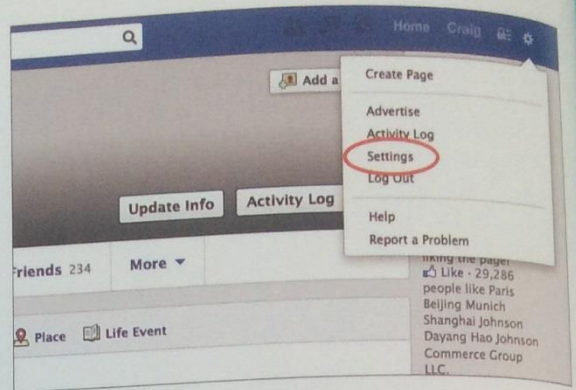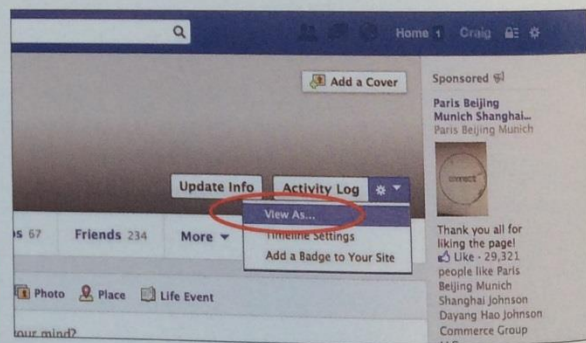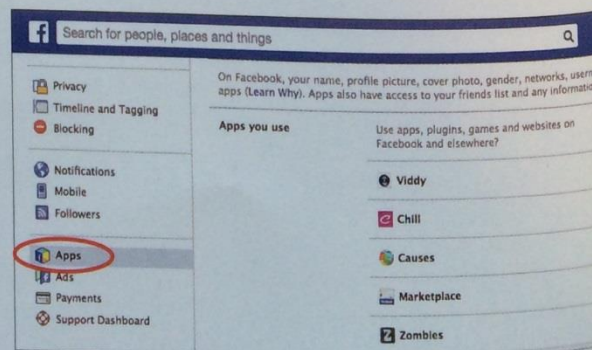

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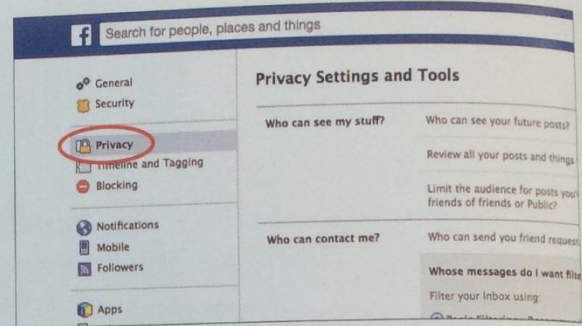
Step 2
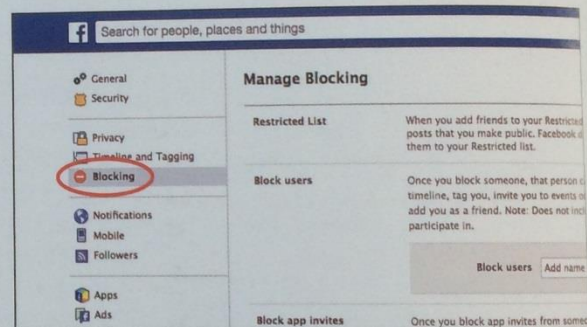
Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Control what kids find online

As they get older, your children will be doing internet research to help with homework. Here's how to keep adult content out of search results

Google

To set up Google SafeSearch

1 Go to **google.co.uk** and type a keyword in to the search box. Click 'Search' and the gear icon will appear on the top right-hand corner of the page. Click on the gear icon, then on 'Search Settings' from the drop-down menu.

2 On the 'Search Settings' page, tick the 'Filter explicit results' box, then click 'Save' at the bottom of the page. If you have a Google account, you can lock SafeSearch on your family's computer so that no one except you can change the settings. To do this, click on 'Lock SafeSearch'.

3 When SafeSearch is locked in place, you'll see a set of coloured balls at the top right-hand corner of all search pages. If you can't see them, SafeSearch is not locked.

Remember...

1 Google SafeSearch activates 'strict filtering'. However, if some adult content sites or explicit pictures slip through the net then you can report it to Google at **google.com/webmasters/tools/safesearch**

2 To lock SafeSearch, you need a Google account. If you don't lock your settings, they will stay in place but can be changed by anyone using the computer.

3 If you use more than one browser, you will need to set Google SafeSearch on each one. Likewise, if you have different user profiles for everyone who uses your family computer, you'll need to set up SafeSearch for each of them.
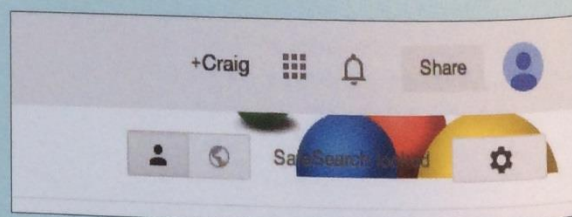
For more information on Google's family safety policies and features, go to **google.com/goodtoknow/familysafety**
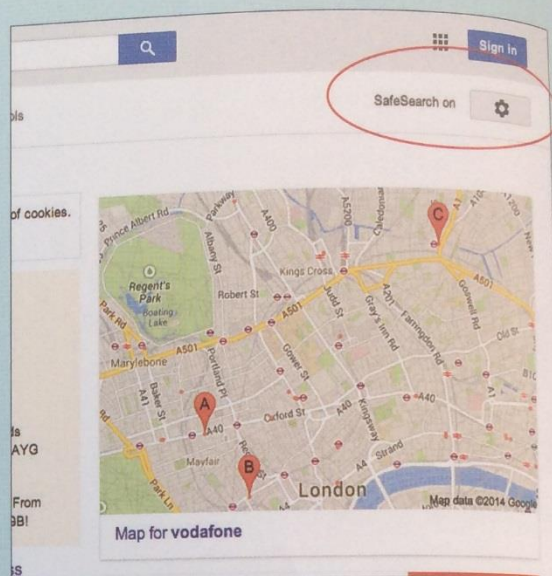
Step 1
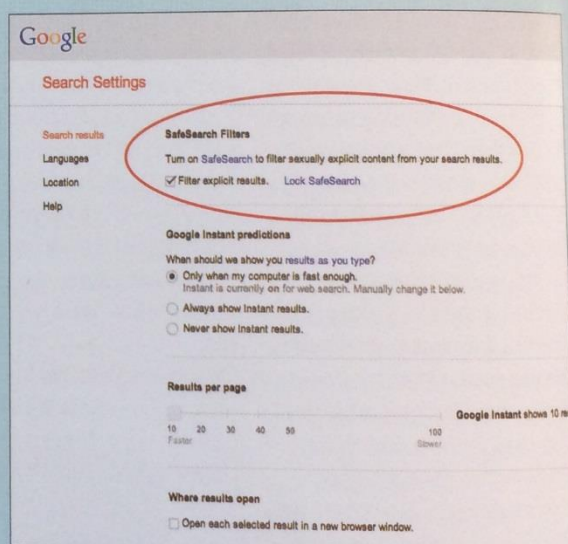
Step 2

Step 3

Report online concerns

If you ever encounter anything abusive, inappropriate or illegal online, there are some useful contacts to keep close at hand

...to service providers

Google
Google SafeSearch
Set to 'Moderate Filtering', this screens sites that contain sexually explicit content and removes them from your search results. To filter explicit text, change your settings to 'Strict Filtering'. If inappropriate sites still appear, you can report it to Google at: **google.com/webmasters/tools/safesearch**
For more information, go to: **google.com/goodtoknow/familysafety**

Facebook
Facebook
You can report offensive content by using the 'Report' button. To flag a photo or video, click the gear icon at the top right of the page and select 'Report This Photo'. Facebook will review the content and take appropriate action. For more information, go to: **facebook.com/safety**

YouTube
YouTube
To report a video on YouTube as inappropriate, click the 'Flag' button beneath it. YouTube then reviews the report and removes videos that violate its Terms of Use. Users who continue to break these rules will have their accounts penalised or closed. For more information, go to: **youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety**

...to the police and other authorities

bbfc
British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)
The BBFC works with filmmakers, mobile operators and on demand digital service providers to ensure that children view or access only age-appropriate content. If you have seen something on a platform, service or other provider that carries a BBFC age rating and you have feedback about the age rating, you can call, email or write to the BBFC. For more information, go to: **bbfc.co.uk**

The National Crime Agency's CEOP Command
The National Crime Agency's CEOP Command helps young people who are being sexually abused, or who are worried that someone they've met online is trying to abuse them. This might be someone who is:
• Chatting about sex online.
• Asking them to meet up face to face.
• Asking them to do sexual things on webcam.
• Asking for sexual pictures.
• Making them feel worried, anxious or unsafe.
If this is happening to your child, or you're worried that it might be, report it to CEOP at: **ceop.police.uk**

IWF
Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
If you come across any child sexual abuse content (child pornography), or criminally obscene adult content on the web, report it to the IWF by clicking 'Report Criminal Content' on their website. Your report could help trace a victim and save them from further abuse, and all reports are confidential and can be made anonymously. For more information, go to: **iwf.org.uk**

ParentPort
ParentPort is run by the UK's media regulators to protect children from inappropriate material. If you've seen or heard something unsuitable for children on TV, online, in a film, advert, video game or magazine, report it by clicking 'Make a Complaint' on the ParentPort website. It then directs you to the relevant regulator. E.g. to complain about a game on a mobile phone, you need the Video Standards Council website. For more information, go to: **parentport.org.uk**

PhonePayPlus
PhonePayPlus regulates premium-rate services in the UK and offers free advice or can investigate a problem on your behalf. If you have a complaint about a premium-rate service, contact the company first. If that doesn't work, contact PhonePayPlus. Complaints can include the cost of a text/call not being stated; misleading service claims; offensive content, a prize not delivered, a request for termination of the service being ignored; or a call being unnecessarily long, which makes it costly. For more information, go to: **phonepayplus.org.uk**