

Title of Session: Teachers In Training - Internet Safety

Moderator: Mary Thompson

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MaryFT: Okay...let's take off

CristinaV: ready

MaryFT: Welcome James, Cristina, and Bj

BJB2: shall we start with introductions?

MaryFT: let's do that

JeffC joined the room.

BJB2: I'd officially like to welcome Mary back after a long break!

JeffC: Welcome back Mary!

BJB2 . o O (we missed you)

MaryFT: My name is Mary Thompson - I am a professor of educational technology at the University of Houston

MaryFT: I missed you all too

MaryFT: it's been quite a few months!

BJB2: I'm a communications teacher in Pennsylvania and on Tapped In helpdesk.

SusanR joined the room.

MaryFT: I teach teachers about using computers in their classrooms

JeffC: I'm Helpdesk here and have been helping educators online for some time.

JamesH: I'm a fifth grade teacher in Orange County, CA. I'm new to Tapped In.

JenniferAG joined the room.

SusanR: sorry I am being summoned; will return later

AnneWi joined the room.

CristinaV: I am a student teacher. I have been working with first graders for 7 weeks and now I am going to start working with 4th grade for another 7 weeks

JenniferAG: Hi everyone

MaryFT: super glad to have you here James!

BJB2: welcome, Jennifer and Anne

BJB2: we're just doing introductions

CristinaV: I am also in Mary's technology class

AnneWi: I teach a 4/5 combo. I am currently taking a ma course and we are getting to know the Tapped In site.

MaryFT: that's great Anne...glad you are here

DianneA: I am a pre-service teacher for K-6, in Wollongong Australia

SusanR: moderator of the K to 3+ Great Resources group/discussions and K to 8 Occasional Teacher from Ontario Canada

MaryFT: While everyone is joining us and introducing themselves, I'd like you to think about two questions:

MaryFT: 1. How much do you think your students know about online safety?

MaryFT: 2. How much do you think YOU know about online safety?

RachelRe joined the room.

BJB2: Kids know everything and are invincible

MaryFT: welcome Rachel - we're doing introductions

MaryFT nods to Bj

RachelRe: Ok, sorry I'm late. Had a class till 8 at UH

MaryFT: you must be working with the same kids I've been teaching today Bj!

BJB2 chuckles. I hope not, Mary!

MaryFT: Just a little background on why I chose this topic tonight...

MaryFT: ...a colleague and I have been doing Internet Safety presentations for HS students in our area

MaryFT: she designed a wonderful activity for older students and adults that I will share with you tonight

JeffC: Kids think, and rightly so, that adults focus almost 100% on Internet "safety" and yet don't really have a clue as to how to use it constructively. As a result of the chilling effect that schools place (with filters, etc.) students take it as a challenge to buck authority when online. The focus on sexual predators on MySpace for example belies the fact that there are a lot of things more prevalent and nasty there than the few real predators (who kids are usually savvy enough to avoid). I know quite a bit, am on several internet safety boards and am also iSafe certified.

JenniferAG: This class is what I need to know for my students

MaryFT: I think the almost total focus on MySpace is a definite problem too Jeff

JamesH: I'd like to learn more about safety issues. I think that sometimes we are overprotecting the kids to the point that the net is no longer useful for them.

CristinaV: I agree

MaryFT: some students in my class today said their parents had forced them to give up their MySpace accounts and thought (wrongly) that this made their kids safe

MaryFT: James - by "overprotecting" do you mean applying filters at school?

RachelRe: The filters on the computers at my school are so strong that even when looking up a book in the online card catalog for the school's library (titled Uncle Daddy) I couldn't even view the card catalog page for that book because of the filter.

JamesH: I mean filters, banning downloads, blocking group sites like MySpace and the parental hysteria about how dangerous the net is.

JenniferAG: 90% of my students said they have a my space. (8th graders) I told them to have it set to private to avoid anyone they don't know

MaryFT: so if we apply lots of filters and strict rules at school it means that the kids are safe when they get home right?

JeffC: The mainstream media does little to help. The "Dateline" series on sexual predators does the same show over and over, and does little to really inform the public.

I've yet to see them take time talking with Art Wolinsky (of WiredSafety) or Anne Collier (of BlogSafety) or a number of other professionals who have constructive ideas and alternatives.

MaryFT: that's good advice Jennifer but it does not render them safe - we'll see why during our activity

JamesH: Wouldn't it be better to teach the kids how to use online communications tools effectively and show them the pitfalls so they can be savvy users?

JenniferAG: sadly some of those predators were teachers

AnneWi: And look at the current Foley situation.

MaryFT: what do you all think of James's radical idea - that we should TEACH the students how to be safe online?

JenniferAG: it's the only way

AnneWi: Great idea, but how?

JeffC: Unfortunately admins fear that something bad will happen and operate on a foundation of paranoia. I **could** teach online safety to the local school district, but so far they've chosen to ignore the issue rather than deal with it.

JamesH: I work at a K-8 school and kids are not allowed to access e-mail sites on school computers. No online interaction at all.

MaryFT: there are some very nice resources online that can help introduce the topic of online safety (**JeffC** can definitely help here I know)

JenniferAG: If it was my child I would want it as a parent, parents control the districts

AnneWi: Perhaps a PTA initiative?

MaryFT: James - what if you approached your admin with a proposal for a lesson that involved emailing experts at local Universities - would they relent do you think?

JamesH: If it was controlled to the point that the e-mail went through my account, probably. I don't think they would like to have the students e-mail anyone directly.

MaryFT nods to James

JeffC: Well... if you're willing to go through a few hours of online training, you can become certified at <http://www.isafe.org>

MaryFT: So does anyone work at a school where there is a focused training on online safety?

AnneWi shakes head no

JeffC: There are problems with their curriculum though. It tends to take a "just say no" approach, which doesn't really work. A federal report indicated that students who took the training new more than their counterparts who didn't, however, their surfing habits *were not significantly different*.

MaryFT: for teachers or students?

JenniferAG: no

CristinaV: not that I have heard of

JeffC: The training is for teachers, so they may teach their students.

MaryFT: By "just say no" approach Jeff - do they recommend that kids just stay off Blogger, MySpace, etc?

JenniferAG: Thanks for the info Jeff I'm going to tell my department about it

JeffC: I feel that any internet safety class should not simply address the pitfalls and horrors of predators, phishing, etc., but show constructive sites and alternatives for students to use. If you don't give them something positive, students will tune out after 5 minutes. Yes... they pretty much recommend staying off of MySpace... and frankly, most of their curriculum is for teachers, not really students.

MaryFT: so - let me just get this straight - we know that our students are using the Internet and we know that there are things out there we would like them to avoid but we ignore it (don't teach it)?

CristinaV: right. how do we teach it?

SusanR: We are using the activities from the media awareness network here in Ontario, Canada

MaryFT: LOVE that stuff Susan! Can you give the link here?

JamesH: I think it should be addressed. There are a whole lot of elementary kids on MySpace these days.

SusanR: <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/internet/index.cfm>

MaryFT: good question Cristina

SusanR: here is the main site <http://www.media-awareness.ca/>

MaryFT: let's take a look at one resource that you can use (tomorrow) to introduce this topic to your elementary students

MaryFT: don't worry HS teachers - we'll look at stuff for you too

MaryFT: for elementary, one of the best resources I have found is <http://www.netsmartzkids.org/indexfl.htm>

JenniferAG: James I can't imagine a child in 4th grade with a my space, that's scary

MaryFT: spend 5 mins. looking at either the NetSmartz Kids or Media Awareness site and then report back here to let us know what you found

JamesH: They are out there.

RachelRe: Mary, I keep getting kicked off. I missed what we are supposed to be doing. I apologize. Could you please repeat that?

MaryFT: AND they're smart enough to lie about their ages so that their profiles are not blocked

MaryFT: take a look at either <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm> or <http://www.netsmartzkids.org/indexfl.htm> and report back on what you find there

RachelRe: got it. thanks

MaryFT: Susan - I am glad you reminded me about the Media Awareness site - I have used it also

MaryFT: How are you using it?

JenniferAG: The media awareness is nice because it addresses teachers and parents

MaryFT nods to Jennifer

MaryFT: why is that important do you think?

SusanR: I like the games which are not overly cutesy and they also they have pdf teaching guides to accompany the games at the media awareness network

JenniferAG: Because Parents need to make their kids aware to reinforce what the teacher has taught them

MaryFT: yep - it's difficult to find games that are not "overly cutesy"

MaryFT nods to Jennifer

SusanR: Here is an overview <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/games/index.cfm>

CristinaV: Both parents and teachers need to work as a team to keep our kids safe

MaryFT: and parents are scared, I think, and have too little information to really make informed decisions

MaryFT: some go overboard and can actually push their kids into taking risks just to be daring

MaryFT: absolutely Cristina

MaryFT: and anything that teachers can offer parents by way of thoughtful resources is probably good

AnneWi: Both of those sites are great resources.

MaryFT: okay teachers - could you see yourselves using any of these resources in your classrooms? Why/Why not?

JamesH: I checked out the raps on NetSmartz Kids. They seem a little cute.

MaryFT nods

AnneWi: How are teachers incorporating them into their school day?

JamesH: I worry about the kids who already know all this stuff and think they are smart enough to "handle it."

JenniferAG: How are you putting nods I'm new at this

CristinaV: Yes how can we help them stay safe

MaryFT: that's the group that I'm working with now James - very net-savvy and think that adults really don't get it

MaryFT: Jennifer - type :nods

JeffC: that's the way most kids are... about the Net in specific and life in general!

JamesH: Some kids think they can out think any adult which may be how so many get into trouble.

MaryFT: Cristina - would you consider using any of the NetSmartz activities as materials in your classroom?

JenniferAG nods

JenniferAG: cool

MaryFT: if you are planning an activity that uses the Internet it makes sense that you might introduce safety at that point

JamesH cheers for Jenny

MaryFT claps

CristinaV: Yes, I think my first graders would really enjoy the tunes and the games

MaryFT: okay - I'd like to introduce a special activity that we've been using to let students see what they know about online safety

CristinaV: Is there anything that I can use for bilingual students

MaryFT: we've made it look like the very popular MySpace to acknowledge that we know that students will continue using online social networks but to reinforce some of the rules about staying safe online

MaryFT: rules can be very dry

MaryFT: and students will often tune them out

JeffC puts up his MySpace profile:

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=48599090>

JeffC: The basic problem with MySpace and other sites is that educators really haven't given thought one to how social networking sites could be used productively in the classroom.

MaryFT: so what are some of the rules that you know you and your students should follow when using any online social network?

SusanR: I sampled myspace as well; I think I almost was hooked

SusanR: http://profile.myspace.com/gadabout_Sue

SusanR: just to see what it was like

MaryFT: and with the current climate Jeff it's not likely to happen any time soon is it?

JenniferAG: If you go to pimp my site you can add a lot more to your space such as pictures and such

JeffC: nope... and that's the straight DOPA

MaryFT: so even we are lured by the joys of MySpace!

JeffC: It took me 4 years to get Tapped In chat unfiltered.

JeffC: . o O (in my local district)

JeffC: and this is the safest and most secure site for teachers to create K-12 classrooms and bring their students online.

MaryFT: what do you avoid doing on MySpace - i.e. what rules do you follow (if any)

RachelRe: I can't use tapped in at my school because of the filters

JeffC: don't click on unknown profiles who message you... they may be redirects to porn sites.

JeffC: don't go to a profile and then when a new "myspace login" page pops up, login again... it's a phishing attempt.

JeffC: myspace phishing is rampant.

JenniferAG: my space is blocked at the school, but at home I avoid giving out too much info for safety reasons

JeffC: if you're a teen, don't add a friend if you don't really know the person... or at the very least, make sure they are truly a "friend of a friend."

MaryFT: so you don't post your name, phone #, etc?

MaryFT: full name I mean

RachelRe: I don't add anyone who requests me unless I know them personally

JeffC: I post my real name... my phone number isn't there... I don't create online personas. But then I'm 48 and fat.

RachelRe: first name posted sometimes, but never last name or phone number!!!

MaryFT: but some kids do post that info don't they?

JenniferAG: Yes you don't want anyone showing up at your door!

JeffC: Of course I get hit on by women from Ghana every day on YIM!

RachelRe: I have never seen a phone number or address posted on myspace

RachelRe: I guess I know smart people?!?

JeffC: I'd focus on what kids could/should do on MySpace in particular and the Net in general.

JamesH: I have seen kids who posted their real first name, city and school name.

JeffC: oh... one more don't: don't be a hater.

MaryFT: but they are out there doing things that they shouldn't

JenniferAG: That's how the predators find the kids

JeffC: Predators know that there are kids in schools... that's a given.

MaryFT: some are deliberately provocative - back to "bucking the system" to see what they can get away with

JamesH: I've also heard that some kids have two pages, one for the parents and one for their friends.

JeffC: Here's a controversial statement: I'd rather my kid was lured away by a MySpace predator than grabbed off the street by a total stranger.

JeffC: That's true James

JenniferAG: There's a difference

MaryFT: why Jeff?

JeffC: because there's an electronic trail

MaryFT nods

JeffC: and frankly... for every kid lured off of the net, there are 100 stranger abductions. Why doesn't Dateline do a show on that?

JeffC: The reason is that net predators are a hot ticket item and fantastic infotainment.

JamesH: It is easier to point a finger at MySpace or the internet. Hard to protect against off the street abduction.

JeffC: That's why almost no politician voted against DOPA.

JenniferAG: Its posted on the freeways

MaryFT: because parents do not have the same sense of fear - they feel like they can teach their kids how to be safe at the mall, on the street, etc.

JeffC: I disagree Mary, I think that parents have too much of a sense of fear about the Net.

AnneWi: What is DOPA?

JeffC: ... and too little about what their kids could be doing that would be fun.

JeffC: Deleting Online Predators Act

AnneWi nods thanks

JamesH: We need to get the parents online as well. I'm dragging my students' parents onto a e-mail list kicking and screaming.

JeffC: for example, my kid signed up for an online role playing game where werewolves fight vampires. I play along with him, making sure that contacts are under control.

MaryFT: right - they fear the Net because it is unknown - they don't know HOW to teach their kids to stay safe there so they disallow it

MaryFT: same with schools

JeffC: use virtual duct tape James

JamesH: Many of them are not all that tech savvy and rely on their kids to get the e-mail for them.

RachelRe: This is off the subject, but I did not really like the Netsmartz kids site too much (i teach Kindergarten) but I am really liking the Disney's Surfswell Island

JeffC: well... when you're living in a world where fear seems to be the number #1 commodity, there is little room for true learning, exploring and creating.

MaryFT: good Rachel!

JenniferAG: I have to go, it was nice learning from everyone

JenniferAG: bye

JamesH: Goodnight Jenny.

BJB2: our time is almost up, Mary

BJB2: Thanks for joining us, Jennifer

MaryFT: I see that - and we were just getting started

JeffC is willing to stick around and continue the discussion.

JamesH can also stay a little longer

BJB2: the next Teachers in Training discussion is scheduled for November 2

SusanR: a provocative discussion, Mary and Jeff!

MaryFT can stay for about 10 more minutes

MaryFT: thx Susan

RachelRe: I can stay also

JeffC: let me put up a couple links for safety sites

AnneWi: Thanks for the great sites and interesting conversation.

JeffC: <http://www.blogsafety.com/category.jspa?categoryID=3>

JeffC: that site discusses MySpace almost exclusively

JeffC: <http://www.wiredsafety.org/forums/ws/index.php>

MaryFT: take a look at

<http://www.coe.uh.edu/courses/cuin3111/safety/myspace/activity.htm>

JeffC: this one is wiredsafety... they have an entire training process and you can become part of a team of professionals supporting online safety.

MaryFT: we use this activity to discuss with the students what they should and should not post online

MaryFT: it's very interesting how many students feel they are completely protected if their profile is set to private

SusanR: MySpace is more than a blog; it's a community, a music source, a rankings site — many things .. it all appeals to teens

JeffC: it also has over 100 million members... making it about the 15th largest country in the world!

JamesH: I think some kids think that there is safety and anonymity in numbers.

JeffC: but they also know that there are freaks out there.

JeffC: of course there will always be those who are totally naive.

JamesH: Back to being smart enough to "handle it."

SusanR: awareness is the key

JamesH: There are adults who are totally naive. That's why spam works.

MaryFT: awareness and application of the rules of the road I think

MaryFT: I tell my students that it's like driver's ed - I don't tell them not to drive the car I just ask them to drive it safely

SusanR nods

MaryFT: or with safety in mind

SusanR likes the analogy to driving

CristinaV: good analogy

RachelRe: I like that too...the high schoolers can really relate to that

JeffC: virtual air bags? now there's a thought... when a surfer does something unsafe something pops up from the monitor going "Danger! Danger Will Robinson!"

JamesH: There are parental controls that do that kind of stuff. They monitor the keyboard for the phone number, address, etc.

MaryFT: yes but kids use the computer at the friends' houses, or grandma's, or at the mall...what then?

MaryFT: that's where all the filtering in the world fails

JamesH: Exactly. Most of the really savvy kids know how to turn off the controls anyway.

MaryFT: you have to make them responsible for their own safety and give them the tools to understand

MaryFT: none of this cloak and dagger stuff

MaryFT smiles

RachelRe: then that is the parents' fault for not teaching the kids the right way to be safe. if you don't allow the to use the internet they will find ways to use it anyway

MaryFT: you've got it

MaryFT: but not just parents - schools need to take up the charge as well

JeffC: here's something on internet safety that I bet 97% of the users are unaware of.

RachelRe: I agree

MaryFT: schools can help educate parents and the community

JeffC: when you surf the net... do **not** use your Admin account on your computer.

BJB2 . o O (97% if statistics are made up on the spot, Jeff?)

JeffC: create a separate and limited account... this will make it virtually impossible for hackers to add malware to your computer... since limited accounts can't install executables.

JeffC creates his own statistics on the spot 99% of the time.

JamesH: I like what I've heard tonight. I'm going to see what I can do about promoting online safety awareness at my site.

BJB2 winks

BJB2: Ready to call it a night?

JeffC: seriously though... if you're on a PC with Windows XP, etc., then I strongly advise you to create a second limited user account to surf with.

BJB2 . o O (I think we've reached consensus on the safety issues)

MaryFT: I'd love to hear about your successes James

JamesH: Don't use IE on Windows either. Use Firefox or Mozilla. Less holes in the security.

MaryFT: awww BJ!

CristinaV: Thanks for all the great advice.

JamesH: I'll try to check in next month. This is a good group.

MaryFT: yay!

SusanR: what about students using youtube

JeffC: make them write about what they view Susan!

NathanL: only if they share the "good" links

SusanR: good idea

JamesH: It's a school night. I've got homework to do. Goodnight all.

MaryFT: take care

BJB2 waves goodnight

MaryFT: I'm headed out too - gotta spend some quality time with la familia

JamesH backs out of the room quietly.

MaryFT: I really appreciate you all!

RachelRe: thanks Mary, have a good night!