

Transcript Season 2 Episode 11 : Staying Safe Online

Podcast Opener:

Everyone needs some advice now and then. If you are getting ready to leave home or have been on your own for a while, Grown Up U: Facts for Success can give you trusted advice that can take the stress out of adulthood. Listen and find some answers to the questions being constantly bombarded at you.

Podcast Script:

Valerie Turner: In today's Grown Up You podcast we are going to learn about the importance of and tips for staying safe on the internet. We all know the internet as a place of endless information, connections, resources, apps, and of course, games. It has become the "next best thing to sliced bread" as the old saying goes.

For as much good that the internet can and does bring to our lives, it also brings about the bad and ugly. From people who misrepresent themselves and their intentions, to account hackers stealing identities and the spread of false and misleading information, we all must be vigilant in our efforts to stay safe while using the internet as well as keeping personal and account information protected when we are not on the internet.

Listen as Julie Goings, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent from Phillips County, talks about staying safe online.

Julie Goings: It seems that everyone is online these days-from the very young to quite old. With all of the posting being done, it may be difficult to remain safe on the web. By taking a few safeguards, you can help protect yourself and your children.

One of the most important things we need to do is create strong, unique passwords and protect them from others. Each account should have a different password....don't reuse passwords for different accounts, as that makes everything vulnerable.

Do not give out personal information to anyone. This includes your address, phone numbers, financial information, location, etc. Some legitimate websites will require that type of information, but they will be secure and will not call for or request this information in an email.

Remember, some seemingly innocent questions could lead to discovery of passwords. Think before you answer quizzes and games. And never reply to emails that request personal or financial information. When in doubt, don't reply.

When making posts or sharing pictures, keep in mind the appropriateness of the content. Would you want your grandmother to see it? Would you want it on the front page of the newspaper? Is it kind? It is safe to assume that any post is actually permanent.

If it could cause a problem for you or anyone else, leave it unsaid. In fact, schools, organizations, and potential employers often browse sites to get a better feel for candidates! Could what they find about you, cost you your job or next big promotion?

Be selective about who you accepted as a friend or follower as well as set security settings and controls so that everyone doesn't see what you post. Restrict the people you don't know and those you are unsure of. Remember, people online are not always who they say they are.

Don't open links that appear unusual or suspicious. Hover over links in email and internet posts to see their legitimate address.

People tend to share things quickly, without authentication. Don't share what you are not sure of or can't verify as factual. Likewise, anything that makes you feel uncomfortable should be deleted immediately. If it is extremely inappropriate, there may be reason to report to the authorities.

When going out of town for several days, don't announce it on social media. You could be notifying criminals that your home is unattended. Consider waiting until you have returned to post those pictures and tell how nice the trip was.

Children should be warned OFTEN that they do not tell when they are home alone! Predators could take this opportunity to take advantage of them.

As much as we want to protect our bank accounts, credit cards, and other financial assets, we certainly want to be more careful with the safety of our children and ourselves. The number one online safety rule is to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone who is met online. If making a purchase or exchanging goods, use caution and meet in well-lit public places. Take a friend with you or meet at the police station. Do not put yourself at risk!

Parents have the added responsibility of protecting children. Teach your children about the responsible use of computers. Don't be afraid to discuss the dangers! Tell them about kidnapping and sexual victimization. Warn them of the risks. Find out about computer safeguards being used at their school, in the library and at the home of friends. Always maintain access to a child's online accounts and monitor their email, texts, and social media accounts. Know their passwords, use parental controls for younger children and look over their shoulder from time-to-time.

Watch for warning signs of trouble. If your child is spending large amounts of time online, especially at night and refusing to show you what they are receiving or turning off the screen

quickly when you enter the room, you might need to take control. Watch for messages from unknown or unidentified senders and messages or calls from adults. Remember who the adult is- this is not the time to be your child's best friend. If you discover pornography on the computer or your child becomes overly withdrawn, you may need to intervene.

Bullying has long been a problem, but the introduction of cyberbullying has put us all at increased risk. A repeated imbalance of power and aggression could easily create negative actions. Hiding behind a computer screen makes it easier to bully. It is anonymous and victims are easily accessible. The one who is bullying often feels empowered and will show a lack of restraint.

Types of cyberbullying include harassment, distributing untrue and derogatory information about others, fighting by using angry or vulgar language, and stalking. Impersonating another and pretending to be someone else can be very damaging, as can be stalking and threatening.

With online bullying, a simple share could easily reach millions of viewers. Yet another reason sexting and photos must not be sent over the internet. Once a photo goes out, you can never get it back. You have lost all control over it. And you cannot trust anyone with something that sensitive! Again, would you want your grandmother to see it?

Don't reply to bullies in anger, as this will only encourage and inflame them. In fact, don't reply to them at all. Think before you text or post! If someone is misbehaving online, screenshot threats, block them, and report them. If you must, shut down the entire account.

These behaviors must be reported to authorities and to a trusted adult. These behaviors are criminal and should be handled by professionals. The state's attorney general's office is responsible for punishing these crimes. You can find their contact information online or call (501) 482-8982. They also offer free resources to use for educational purposes.

Valerie Turner: From browsing DIY ideas or researching a term paper to paying bills and connecting with family, the internet has something for everyone, practically everywhere and available every hour of the day. The internet provides limitless possibilities including good, bad, and ugly ones.

Remember to keep personal information and passwords personal, don't post information you wouldn't want your grandma to see, use caution when opening files or clicking on links, verify information before passing along as fact, teach children how to be safe online and monitor their activity, recognize the signs of cyberbullying, and report such behavior, including criminal, to the proper authorities.

Our society and culture have become forever connected to the internet. Staying safe online is as important as staying safe when meeting in person.

Podcast Closer:

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