

Title of Session: Internet Safety
Moderator: Nancy Willard and Jeff Cooper
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Room: After School Online Room

JeffC joined the room.

TaraCo: Not sure what to talk about really. I figured I'd be more of a passenger...

JeffC: Nancy is the expert here.

NancyEW: I am not sure what to do. I also have to leave early to take my son to a soccer practice.

JeffC: I have a few resources on Internet Safety at <http://www.mybookmarks.com/public/coops>

JeffC: I have a folder there entitled: Internet Safety and Tutorials with about 50 links.

TaraCo: that's a serious list you've got there Jeff!

JeffC: Nancy... does the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use have a website? I'm guessing <http://www.csriu.org>

NancyEW: Those are nice links. My web site is <http://csriu.org>.

SusanR: We are using the media awareness network for web safety here in Ontario http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/special_initiatives/be_web_aware/index.cfm

JeffC: I'll add both of your sites to my bookmarks.

NancyEW: The media awareness folks are really great. They are the folks in UK, name escapes me right now, are doing the best job.

JeffC: One of the issues for me is the use of filters.

NancyEW: I have proposed doing a story for a new publication that is being initiated on school technology law about the constitutional requirements related to filtering.

NancyEW: what are your concerns around filtering?

JeffC: I ran an after school program, and the kids were constantly kept out of sites, many of which were really no problem at all... for one reason or another. It really puts a damper on using the Net in the classroom. Simultaneously, it takes responsibility out of the hands of students who think "oh... this site *isn't* filtered... therefore it must be ok." That sort of thinking really burns me... but that's what we're doing to students.

TaraCo: I agree Jeff.

NancyEW: what filtering system were they using?

JeffC: Meantime... I had students who couldn't even get to their teacher's biology site. Dan's Guardian

JeffC: Filtering removes the responsibility for appropriate behavior from the student and replaces it with software... this is exactly the direction we should *not* be going with technology (in my not so humble opinion).

NancyEW: Well, I have tested some filtering products and found one product used in many schools that is blocking gay/lesbian advocacy sites but not anti-homosexual agenda sites, blocking pro-choice sites, but not pro-life sites.

JeffC: Even worse

TaraCo: wow--that's pretty amazing, Nancy. But unfortunately not unexpected

NancyEW: Also some school districts are picking categories, such as categories that block access to non-traditional religions, that definitely should not be blocked.

TaraCo: this type of news makes me so upset I don't even know what to do.

NancyEW: Unfortunately, I have been trying to advocate for a more comprehensive approach for years now and getting nowhere.

JeffC: I had a little impact in making the web a little safer from porn.

SusanR: No filtering yet in our school district...students sign a web use agreement at the beginning of the school year. They are held accountable.

NancyEW: There is a book on my site entitled Safe and Responsible use of the Internet that set out a comprehensive approach to address these concerns.

NancyEW: You are lucky in CA that there is not a federal requirement.

TaraCo: that's great, Susan. Our district has very strict filtering

JeffC: In mybookmarks site... I was showing it to professors about four years ago... and one of them said "hey... this site is a porn site." Sure enough... one of the domains had lapsed... and a porn site bought it up. I was furious of course... since all my sites were handpicked by me as safe. Long story short... I talked with my Congressman's office for about 6 months... and last year... legislation was passed that forbids porn sites from buying up lapsed kid sites.

TaraCo applauds that

NancyEW: I am pleased to see that legislation. Well sometime some day there will be a lawsuit against a school district based on how they are filtering and then we can get around to focusing on helping students learn to make safe choices and hold them accountable for their actions.

JeffC: The legislation was ok... but doesn't nearly go far enough. There is a very simple and easy solution regarding porn... simply create a .sex and .xxx domain... and let them have all the porn they want... which would make it extremely easy to filter... of course... the porn kings would have a field day fighting it on free speech grounds in the courts... but that is where we should be going.

JeffC: More important Nancy, is that because so many good sites get blocked because of these filters... many teachers shy away from using the Net at all... they won't integrate tech with curriculum because they can't really count on the Net as a resource.

NancyEW: I think we should be establishing really safe places for younger kids, teacher older kids how to avoid going to the wrong places, and then holding them accountable.

NancyEW: I also have seen evidence that students simply do not use the school resources because they keep getting blocked.

JeffC: There is a "safe internet" being formed... ever hear of "vlibrary"?

NancyEW: No I haven't. I do like the Kidlib product

SusanR: vlibrary???

NancyEW: The other problem with teachers, however, is that far too many are not well-prepared enough to use the Internet effectively. So they use the Internet for internet recess -- which is the time when kids mess-up.

JeffC: Go to: <http://snipurl.com/resources1>

NancyEW: I have had far too many tech directors tell me that they receive requests from teachers to unblock gaming sites for their students. Not educational games.

JeffC: That's a trackstar presentation I made... both EBSCO and Vlibrary are there.

JeffC: With login info...

TaraCo: I agree Nancy. Too many teachers simply tell the kids to go to the lab and "research" and pay little or no attention to what they do. There simply isn't often enough structure.

JeffC: I know what you're talking about Nancy... they're using computers as baby-sitters... not that sites like <http://www.neopets.com> can't be used educationally... I think for the most part though educators are giving up because they don't have support.

JeffC: Which actually... gave me an idea... check out: <http://snipurl.com/cooperebay>

NancyEW: I have additional concerns about Neopets -- their currency is Neopoints. And kids can gamble their neopoints -- early experience with gambling is an indicator for gambling addiction.

SusanR: Our district brought in the police department for a web awareness evening for parents.

SusanR: <http://www.bewebaware.org/english/default.aspx>

NancyEW: Basically the problem as I see it is that the use of filtering shifted from being a tool to block access to really bad stuff to a tool for Internet use management. But they are not focusing on the human aspects of Internet use -- because many administrators think they have "solved" the problem.

JeffC: That may be true Nancy... but there are a lot of ways that students do use Neopets... and other sites... and for the most part educators are completely unaware of them... and also haven't given any thought to how to use those sites constructively.

NancyEW: The issue that I am working on right now, that I also think most educators and parents are unaware of is cyberbullying

JeffC nods

SusanR agrees

NancyEW: I have already been told of one suicide and one attempted suicide in our local district that had a cyberbullying component. But when I mentioned cyberbullying to the district safe schools/anti-bullying coordinator he had no idea what I was talking about.

TaraCo: I can imagine what you mean Nancy, but have never heard the term before.

SusanR: Cyberbullying is included in our harassment policy.

NancyEW: I am working on a book on this, will have a 3 hour workshop ready for next fall, and hopefully an online class.

JeffC: Almost every high school in the country has at least one bulletin board where kids hang out... and flame each other.

TaraCo: I should ask my kids about that

NancyEW: Does your policy address only in-school activities or also home. That is where we have difficulties.

NancyEW: Tara, or others, if you want to do so I have a cyberbullying survey that I am testing as a needs awareness tool. I know it is late in the year.

JeffC: Yeah... a tough line. Frankly... I think that is an excellent opportunity to get parents more involved. We talk about it all the time... how we want that to happen. But instead of school administrators trying to lay down the law (which I think would be pretty unenforceable anyways)... I think that parents need to get a clue and get involved with where their kids are going online.

SusanR: I think if it is a home related incident they bring in the local police officer.

TaraCo: If you have it easily available Nancy, I'd love it. We start final exams tomorrow, but if any of my students finish early they might fill it out.

NancyEW: I am indicating that this has to be a "community response". I can send you the survey -- send me an e-mail at nwillard@csriu.org

NancyEW: Actually, I just remembered, BJB posted my book outline on the ASO page. So you can see how I am approaching this.

NancyEW: It is my hope that by focusing on this issue I can bring the technology and school safety folks together and together they can come up with better ways to address Internet use -- and that this will end up helping address the filtering concerns

SusanR: It is under Files

NancyEW: I would love any feedback on this.

NancyEW: I am going to have to take off early. My son has a soccer practice, actually a try out, and I have to get him across town. I would love your review of my outline and any comments. I am working very hard on this right now.

SusanR: I am just skimming this... looks good... is it geared to teachers or students or both??

NancyEW: This is geared for educators then I will develop kids' curriculum

JeffC: OK Nancy... I'm opening the file now.

NancyEW: I am also working on a grant application to do some more research. Susan, if you still have kids, you could also do the needs assessment.

TaraCo: Nancy, I'll send you the email request in a few minutes

NancyEW: I am pleased you are looking at this. And my sincere apologies, but I absolutely have to run. I have enjoyed talking with you. Tara I am glad you were not a passenger ;-)

NancyEW left the room (signed off).

JeffC: So... quite a bit covered in a short time.

TaraCo nods in agreement

SusanR: Profitable session.

JeffC: Did either of you get a chance to look at the Vlibrary site? It's free and safe... with ways to get into a safe internet... periodical research... much more.

SusanR: do you have the URL?

JeffC: start with <http://snipurl.com/resources1>

JeffC: That's my trackstar presentation with a number of links... the second one (I think) is for vlibrary... it includes the login and password information (which was made freely available by OTEN).

JeffC: login: vlibrary password: friend

TaraCo: thanks!

SusanR: Thanks Jeff

JeffC: Look at the Quality Internet

TaraCo: I'm not seeing that.

JeffC: Actually... there isn't a link on the second page... it just mentions it... did you login Tara?

JeffC: Susan... I have to deal with my kids now... will you be able to take care of the 5:00 meeting?

SusanR: I think I can! That's the Social Studies

SusanR: yes

SusanR: I will head over to reception