

## 4. Internet – For everyone

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”Creativity requires the courage to let go of certainties”

*Erich Fromm, psychologist*

### CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 14 – VIDEOS, MUSIC AND IMAGES ON THE INTERNET

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Check the licence of any content that you would like to reuse.

Use the Creative Commons classification on the content you create and post online.

Support fair online business models which enable you to pay for content from your favourite artist, musician or content creators.

### CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 15 – CREATIVITY

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One image can speak a thousand words, especially if we are not careful about our private information and that of others.

Do you understand how to ensure that your ownership of creative output is respected by others?

Plagiarism shows non-respect of creative ownership and can weigh heavily on multiple aspects of society. Are you aware of the multiple ways in which plagiarism can impact on society?

### CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 16 – GAMES

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Life balance is important: is the time you are spending online on games infringing on outdoor and face-to-face activities?

When the games you play online lead you to meet and communicate with strangers, remember that not everyone is who they say they are. Choose “human-moderated” games or games with “safe chat” through pre-selected phrases for very young children.

In-app purchases can be a trap for the unwary in certain games. Have you checked the tips in Fact sheet 13?

### CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 17 – DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

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Do you know your online rights and responsibilities?

Have you checked your digital footprint lately? Put your name into a search engine and see what comes up.

What are the digital skills required to become a fully-fledged digital citizen?

### CHECKLIST FACT SHEET 18 – DIGITAL PARENTING: POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE

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Be positive when parenting in this new digital age and do your best to communicate with your child about what they are doing online, where they are going online and who they are talking to online.

Realise that even though technology has advanced in leaps and bounds, parenting remains much the same: staying active in your children’s life, encouraging them to be good (digital) citizens and emphasising kindness and empathy.

Whether you are the parent of a toddler or a teen, be aware of the challenges of your child’s development with respect to technology. Use technology in ways that help, not hinder, your child’s development.

## Digital parenting: positive and proactive

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— **“Digital natives”** are children who are born in the digital age, this age of technology. They are children who, after just a few minutes spent holding a tablet or smartphone, feel no fear or trepidation in manipulating the technology. They swipe, pinch, poke without always understanding what they are doing, but with the confidence that something is happening on the screen. According to Marc Prensky, “our students today are all ‘native speakers’ of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (Prensky, M. (2001) “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1”, *On the Horizon* 9(5) pp1-6, 1. Available at: <<http://web.archive.org/web/20160413070431/http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>>).

— **“Digital immigrants”** are people who were born before the advent of technology. It is a phrase also coined by Prensky in 2001 and used to describe the generation of people who did not grow up in the Digital age. Again Prensky describes it perfectly by saying: “Those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many

or most aspects of the new technology are, and always will be compared to them, Digital Immigrants" (Prensky (2001), 1-2 <<http://web.archive.org/web/20160413070431/http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>>).

— "Digital parenting" is the notion of guiding "digital immigrant parents" in understanding what their "digital native children" are doing today. The only goal is to protect children, empower parents and keep the communication open between both parties.

### Digital parenting is:

- open communication with your child about Internet risks and benefits;
- regular involvement in your child's Internet activities;
- active protection of your child's digital reputation and digital identity;
- learning with your child the opportunities that the Internet can present;
- protecting your child from the dangers that the Internet may pose;
- bringing your offline parenting skills to the online world.

### Positive parenting is:

- providing your child with positive discipline and positive guidance;
- bringing up your child to be well-behaved, without being harsh;
- teaching your children from an early age how to behave appropriately, showing them the repercussions of "bad" behaviour and the benefits of "good" deeds;
- being clear about what you want your children to do;
- setting specific and appropriate boundaries;
- demonstrating consistency across the board.

— There is a clear crossover as the digital parent and carer need all the tools available in order to be proactive, positive and ensure that their child is using Internet and Wi-Fi enabled devices in a responsible manner.



## IMPORTANCE IN UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

- With the ubiquity of Internet, mobile phones and Wi-Fi connected devices, parents may feel frustrated by their lack of concrete technical knowledge and expertise. And for those parents who are "tech-savvy", they feel concerned by the speed in which their children are embracing the Internet and technology.
- Parents may not know how to deal with children who spend hours playing Minecraft while on a sleepover, or how to set limits on a 17 year-old as regards texting in the evenings, or whether to use a potty-training app to guide their 2 year-old. The questions are endless as technology forges ahead and devices become more streamlined and tech savvy.
- As family structures change, parents may have difficulty maintaining the same technology rules in their partner's home, grandma's home or some other familial environment.
- As technology advances, research on child development and the implications of online use is also advancing, but long-term findings will not be available for a few years yet.



## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

- Initial research has demonstrated that using a smartphone or device to “soothe” children may hamper their ability to self-regulate<sup>1</sup>.
- Raising a child today simultaneously includes raising a responsible digital citizen, as children need to know how to use the Internet and technology safely and wisely.
- Parents should help their child understand digital literacy: the ability to use information well, the ability to use media and digital technologies effectively and the development of digital citizenship.
- The digital world and the Internet have a profound impact on “offline” parenting as well. Seeing the “online” world as separate from the “offline” world is a misconception. With the endless possibilities offered by the online world, children may encounter certain content or experiences at an earlier stage than they would in the “offline” world. That includes “positive” content such as learning to read earlier, learning music, being exposed to a foreign language and so forth. At the same time, children may also be exposed to sexually explicit content, violence, fear, bullying and similar.
- Beware of the commercial side of the Internet. Most of the online services that are “free” rely on opaque business models and cost structures or exploitation of personal data for advertising. Certain “freemium” games, for instance, will entice your child to spend a lot of money to advance in the game, while “advergaming” blur the boundary between game and advertising by discretely associating a product or brand inside a game.
- For nine elements of digital citizenship, see “Digital citizenship: using technology appropriately”<sup>2</sup> and read Fact sheet 17 on digital citizenship.
- The findings from recent studies by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, focusing on the use of technology by families with young children, are helpful in understanding the issues and risks<sup>3</sup>.
- EU Kids Online is now dedicated to reporting on parental concerns across Europe in its parenting blog<sup>4</sup>.



## HOW TO

- Be a role model for your children and place limits on your use of technology.
- Stay informed about the latest online issues and discuss your children’s online activities.
- Speak with your children’s school to determine if there is an online safety programme in place.
- Be careful when removing devices from your tween or teen as a disciplinary measure as this may have unintended consequences, isolating the child from their social connections and networks.
- Speak with other parents to gather good practices at every age.
- To teach your children how to balance their time online, use time restrictions online in the same way as you would teach them to budget pocket money. Give them a set amount of time that they can “spend” each week and let them manage it.
- Stress the importance of offline family time and maintain your weekly family activities.

1. <http://web.archive.org/web/20160424230408/https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/feb/01/toddler-brains-research-smartphones-damage-social-development>

2. [http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine\\_Elements.html](http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html)

3. <http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC93239>

4. <http://web.archive.org/web/20160415215157/http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/parenting4digitalfuture/2015/06/26/svenjas-post-on-little-kids-european-comparison/>



## IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

- Ask the students to write a short blogpost to their parents providing tips on parenting in the digital age.
- Engage in a discussion with students about the use of technology today. What are the benefits? What are the risks? Is there anything that the students can do to promote the benefits and counteract the risks?
- After a discussion on good practices when using the Internet, ask the students to list their top tips to share with their younger siblings, nieces, nephews or younger neighbours. How can younger children learn from the experiences of the students?
- Ask students to consider technology in the 1960s and technology today. Did parents have the same concerns? Why? Why not?



## GOOD PRACTICE

- Talk to your children about who they are talking to online, what they are doing online, where they are going online and when they are going online.
- Keep the dialogue open – even when the subject may be uncomfortable for you – as it is the best way to stay informed about your child’s online activities.
- Alongside the “safe sex” talks with your children, consider having a “safe tech” and a “safe content” Internet talk, and explain the inappropriateness and risks of sexy or extremist photos, talk or messages.
- Be ready to discuss issues such as violence, flaming, bullying, sexuality, gender stereotypes and roles, as your children may encounter these unexpectedly online and will need your guidance to develop resilience and adopt a positive online behaviour in response.
- Understand how to use privacy settings and explain to your child how to put them in place and why it is useful to do so.
- Inform yourself about the business model behind the games, services or websites your child uses. For younger children, make sure that the content is advertising-free, with no hidden costs or “premium” features. It is better to pay a small fee for a game or monthly subscription to a quality service, than expose your child to commercial exploitation attempts.
- Make sure that your children understand the business models behind the services or games they use, or the content they read.
- Make sure your children are not over-sharing (personal information, identifying characteristics, inappropriate photos, etc.).
- Find a healthy balance regarding Internet use and screen time and be a good digital role model yourself.
- Remind your children that anything they write, post or share will exist indefinitely on the Internet – and that it can also be modified and sent around.
- Teach your children how to use reporting tools, so that they can flag any inappropriate content.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

- For information on the effect of iPads on a child's development, see the news report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrQhmcPrhFw>.
- To read Marc Prensky's "Digital natives, digital immigrants" (2001), see: <http://web.archive.org/web/20160413070431/http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>.
- COFACE, the European Confederation of families provides helpful information for families: <http://www.coface-eu.org/>.
- The Parent Zone is a UK site that offers a wealth of information: <http://www.theparentzone.co.uk/>.
- Check out the publication of the Family Online Safety Institute: <https://www.fosi.org/good-digital-parenting/>.
- Vodafone has put out guidelines for parents as well as digital parenting magazines: <https://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/howto-guides.html>.
- Boston University Medical Center has published a report on mobile use: [http://web.archive.org/web/20160607121811/http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub\\_releases/2015-01/bumc-mai013015.php](http://web.archive.org/web/20160607121811/http://www.eurekaalert.org/pub_releases/2015-01/bumc-mai013015.php).
- European Commission Joint Research Centre has published a report on young children and digital technology: <http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC93239>.
- "Play and learn: being online" contains activities for 4-8 year-olds to support parents and teachers in talking with their children about responsible use of the Internet: <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/portal/news/detail?articleId=198308>.
- Guide your young children to sites adapted to their age; there are a wide range of such sites including "Junior: safe search for kids" <https://www.juniorsafesearch.com/> and YouTube Kids <https://kids.youtube.com/>.
- Relevant Council of Europe are included under the Council of Europe webpage on "Children in the digital environment" <http://www.coe.int/en/web/children/the-digital-environment>.