

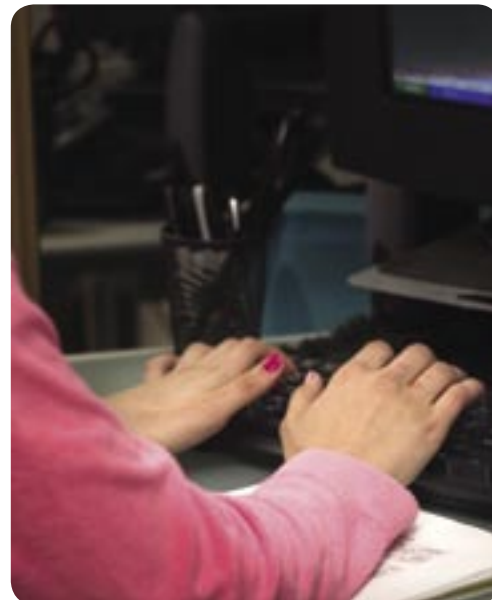
Faculty Insider—*Social Media*

We live in a technological world where students are “always on” and “connected.” Multimedia and technology saturate their lives and are changing the way they learn and socialize.

Web sites like YouTube and MySpace are infiltrating the daily activities of our teens. Social media gives Internet users an opportunity to become active participants in a worldwide community of over 6 billion users. However, social media is not just about socializing. Educators are now taking a look at how they can incorporate these popular tools that are so often used by students for social and entertaining purposes into their learning environments.

So just what are we defining as social media? There is a whole range of online “products” designed these days to facilitate online socialization and interaction. Here is a quick rundown on a few of them. Blogs are online journals in a sense. They can also take video format known as vlogs. Podcasts are audio broadcasts in a format which facilitates downloading for playback on a computer or a digital musical player. Video webcasts are live or streaming video sent over the Web. Wikis are online sites that allow users to add and edit content collectively. These are just a few of the new ways our students are interacting online.

Blogs, vlogs, podcasts, video webcasts and wikis all provide platforms for learning and sharing information. Blogs, and video blogs offer a means for students and educators to share opinions on topics and document projects. Podcasts are a great tool for educators to supplement classroom lessons, provide lessons for students who are unable to attend class or just need a review of classroom lectures. Wikis allow multiple participants to create, manage or update content in a collaborative environment.



Collaborative learning environments develop critical thinking and problem solving skills and encourage students to interact and communicate with their peers. Not only can students interact with their classmates; social media is also making it easy to collaborate between schools in different countries. Geography becomes personal as students take interest in others with whom they work on subjects common to all. i-SAFE recently collaborated with international partners to bring students closer in a global student competition – “Crossing Borders” for Safer Internet Day (SID) on February 6, 2007. European Union schools were paired with schools around the world to

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“We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own.”

– Ben Sweetland

NAC Tracks

Do you use wikis (like curriki.com) and/or blogging for educational purposes?

- A: Yes
- B: No


Vote here

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work on a creative Internet safety project. i-SAFE brought a school from England together with a school in Kentucky, and provided and developed a Web site for students to communicate with each other. That team's collaboration resulted in an award-winning project on "The Power of Image." Check out the entry and watch the students' video blog at <http://xblock.isafe.org/insafe/>.

Educators are also using social media to share resources with other educators. Blogs and wikis are allowing educators to share lesson plans, Web site links, and other educational resources. Web sites like curriki.com enable educators to develop a worldwide databank of curricula.

When it comes to online social media, it is important to remember to keep personal information private. If you *have* to reveal information and want a target audience password protect your material to limit the audience. Most importantly, we as teachers need to ensure that students connect what they are doing *online* with real life. Too many students don't consider the consequences of their actions before doing something that could be potentially dangerous or demeaning. Forethought and education can help ensure the technology is used in a positive manner.

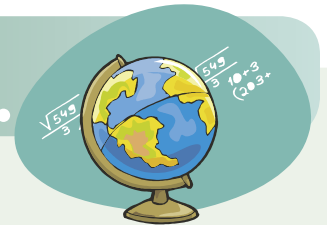
Embrace technology! Take the initiative to learn how you can safely utilize it to enhance the ways that you and your students learn, teach and socialize. 




NAC Corner—*Dangerous Images*

Children have always enjoyed goofing around in front of cameras and video recorders. And why not, there's no harm, right? Unfortunately, current technology has given individual, less control over their own image and where that image ends up. Camera phones are particularly popular and just one way to upload images to the Internet. According to a 2005-2006 i-SAFE National Assessment Center (NAC) survey, from a pool of almost 15,000 students in grades 5-12, 53% have their own cell phone and 28% have cell phones that can take pictures. 10% of students admitted that they have taken pictures of someone with their phone without the other person's knowledge. In a slightly different vein, so far this current academic year, 6% of students nationwide (351 respondents) have reported that they have uploaded inappropriate pictures of themselves to the Internet.

What happens when photos are uploaded to the Internet without the person's knowledge? What identifying information might accompany that photo? Or, what could happen when children upload inappropriate pictures of themselves? The individual whose photo has been surreptitiously taken, unfortunately, has no control over who sees those photos



once they land on the Internet. And, the children who upload their own photos may not be aware of the danger in doing so. Discuss with your students not only the possible danger of uploading their own pictures, but also the responsibility of how they use photos they take of friends and other people. Taking a picture of their best friend with their cell phone to show grandma is probably okay. Taking a picture of someone they know (or don't!) and uploading it to the Internet could pose a risk for that person. Remind your students to be a good friend and protect each other. Be safe! 



In Action—A Letter from one of our Educators

After taking a summer class on i-SAFE Internet safety sponsored by Guilford County Schools, I was determined to share what I had learned with the students at Jefferson Elementary. I decided to focus the lessons on the third through fifth graders. I submitted an Implementation Plan to i-SAFE and received your webcast DVD.

After asking questions and discussing what we as a class did know about the Internet, I found that many of our students surf unsupervised at home. “How many of you have been warned not to talk to strangers?” This is my first question to classes as we start learning about Internet safety. Practically all hands go up. Then I ask, “How many of you have been warned about the dangers on the Internet?” and only a few hands go up. Just as my children had to educate me to “Buckle Up” my seatbelt, we now need to educate our children to teach their parents the rules of the road on the Internet.

We viewed the i-SAFE webcast DVD over a number of weeks as classes visit the Computer Lab once a week. Your DVD was upbeat and “with-it” which kept the students’ attention. Your use of great music and colorful graphics really made it fun to watch. The built-in pauses in the DVD lead to many productive discussions. Our students couldn’t wait until the next lesson to view another segment. Not only did you

inform, but the lessons really stuck with the students. Weeks after our unit was over students would tell me they warned older siblings about giving out too much information. One student even said he now checks out the privacy policy of the sites he visits.

After our unit on Internet safety I developed a pledge sheet for our students and parents to sign. I encouraged the students to talk with their parents or guardians about the things they had learned.

Knowledge is power and we must empower our children with the tools to be safe in this every changing world of technology.

Keep up the great work, i-SAFE.


Thank you,
Virginia Williams
Technology Assistant
Jefferson Elementary School
Guilford County Schools
Greensboro, North Carolina
Striving. Achieving. Excelling.



Get Involved—Community Action

Many teachers want to get involved in Internet safety and security but it comes down to a matter of time. Let’s face it there are only so many hours in the day! We’ve made it simple for you to get involved this month. All you need to do to take the message of Internet safety out into your community is have your class complete this month’s curriculum bonus. They’ll review key Internet safety concepts while creating street signs with important safety messages.

Then, have students hang signs somewhere prominent: a focal bulletin board, the library, in the auditorium. Inform faculty, parents, and others about the message these signs contain staying safe online. Taking a little step like this allows you and your students to take the message of Internet safety out into the community. It allows the students to educate their peers and others. Empowerment takes shape!

i-SAFE would love you to document your project and send in pictures so we can showcase them in our next newsletters. Send pictures to education@isafe.org 





Internet Safety Tip—Protecting your Computer




Is your computer running slower than usual? Are you getting random pop-up ads when online? Unfortunately spyware/adware could be the problem. Have you run a spyware check on your computer lately?

Spyware is software that monitors and gathers user information without their knowledge and then transmits it over the Internet to a parent company. Spyware can gather basic information like what web pages you view, shopping habits, etc. It can also be used to gather e-mail addresses, passwords, and even credit card numbers. In addition, it can slow down your computer and your Internet connection as it transmits information.

So how do you keep your computer secure? You should run a spyware check and removal at least once a month to eliminate these programs—or whenever you think something is slowing down your computer and Internet connection (or you get frequent ad pop-ups from a company).

You will need to download a spyware removal program unless your anti-virus software also includes a spyware component. To find spyware removal software to run—utilize a search engine using the terms “free spyware removal software.” Once you have downloaded spyware removal software, install and run the program according to directions.

Does your computer have spyware? Why not find out now? 


Brain Biology and Online Behavior

Neuroscience, the study of brain function, is helping us to understand how and why students engage in risky or inappropriate behaviors online.

In face-to-face communications, the orbitofrontal cortex of the brain which controls the center for empathy is constantly evaluating emotional and physical cues from the parties involved. Brain science studies show that the frontal lobes responsible for controlling emotions and impulses are not developed enough in youth to allow rational thought processes and that behavioral decision making is impaired. To compensate for the underdevelopment of the frontal lobes, adolescents rely on another area of the brain to determine behavior—the amygdala. The primary use of the amygdala results in emotional, impulsive decision-making. It should then come as no surprise that a lack of face-to-face interaction online, and immature brain development, increase the likelihood that students will be more likely to engage in risky or inappropriate behaviors online.

Research also tells us that discussion and active participation help children to build frontal lobe function resulting in better decision making skills. Help your students build



positive online skills. Discuss appropriate Internet communication and safety and encourage them to watch the i-MENTOR Training videos and participate in mentor activities to reinforce safe Internet practices. 



Donny the Downloader Goes to Broadway



Donny the Downloader on Broadway. Well, not exactly. More like off, off, off Broadway. The new Donny the Downloader assembly premiered in New York in late March, and played to a packed house in the Bronx and Long Island.

You remember Donny the Downloader. He is a cartoon character who tries to impress everyone with his access to music, without bothering to pay for it. Students learn an anti-piracy message through the mis-adventures of the animated 14 year old character; and through a series of videos that show a budding high school-age singer/songwriter named Sonya trying to make it in the real-life world of music. The assembly is truly multi-media. Along with the cartoon and videos, the middle-school student audience enjoys music and a live skit performed by fellow classmates.

That brings us back to the New York assemblies. The skit calls for one of the student/actors to dress up and play the part of Donny the Downloader. However, that's rather difficult at St. Raymond School. It's an all-girls school!

No problem, the Donny poser dressed the part—including wearing the signature blond Donny wig and baseball cap, She received rave reviews, as well as waves of laughter from all of her friends and classmates in the audience. No doubt, the Donny the Downloader Experience was a hit with students.

But, how would the assembly be received by a – well, er, um – more mature group? ASCAP Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Phil Crosland, along with 3 members of the New York-

based PR firm, Cooper Katz, were special guests at St. Raymond School.

“The assembly was just as I’d imagined—only better,” Phil said afterward.

ASCAP raised Donny from a cel; and the performance-rights organization is partnered with i-SAFE to bring the assembly experience to students across the country.

i-SAFE estimates that the Donny the Downloader Experience will reach millions of students nationwide this year.

If you would like to conduct the assembly at your school, choose The Donny the Downloader Experience when filling out your implementation plan, or order it through the i-SAFE store at <http://auth.isafe.org/store/digital.php>.



Site Spotlight—A Source for Bell Activities



As teachers we realize that it is important to engage students immediately in an educational activity the first 5 minutes of class. However, sometimes it is difficult to find or come up with these “bell” activities. This month’s Web site: http://www.education-world.com/a_lesson/archives/fillers.shtml takes you to an archive of lots of five minute filler activities. Call on this site whenever you are stumped for a quick filler and/or class starter activity.



Curriculum Bonus—Create a Sign

This month's curriculum bonus is a fun review activity designing street signs to help warn others to stay safe online. Download the activity at: www.isafe.org/bonus and use it to review any of the Internet safety lessons. Take it one step further as suggested in our "Get Involved" article.


Legislating Internet Safety

Congress is certainly compelled to protect the children of America, it just won't be doing it with the 1998 COPA act anytime soon. A federal judge recently threw out the law that was designed to protect children by forcing Web sites to take measures that would prevent young people from accessing sexually explicit material. Protecting the right of free speech and privacy was central to the ruling.

There have been several bills introduced recently to address the issue of Internet safety. Many of the bills, however, are receiving similar criticism. The COPA ruling was largely based on the concept of the least restrictive application of a law. Many, including the judge, felt that the law was too broad and would have too great of an unintended impact.

Among the laws being discussed in the U.S. Congress, the SAFER NET Act sponsored by Reps. Melissa Bean of Illinois and Baron Hill of Indiana, is proving to be the most widely favored of the bills. This bill seeks to create a public awareness campaign and relies less on filtering and more on education and awareness. It recognizes that education is the best way to equip young people and consumers with the skills they need to be safe online. Rep. Bean, Rep. Hill and the fifty co-sponsors should be commended for not taking away rights while trying to protect America's citizens.



Education and involvement are the best methods when preventing our young people from accessing illicit information and images on the Web. With so many Web sites offering streaming video and other content that may seem harmless, it might seem impossible to prevent access to this type of information. The best way to ensure safe and responsible decisions online is to become educated on how to avoid and detect risky behavior. i-SAFE offers a wealth of information on Internet safety and soon the government will be doing more to assist in these efforts. 

About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in Internet safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences. i-SAFE provides knowledge that will enable them to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior, and to respond appropriately. This is accomplished through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to students, parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. i-SAFE is the only Internet safety foundation to combine these elements. www.isafe.org 