

Faculty Insider—New York PTA Backs Online Safety

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First Virginia, then California, now New York has passed legislation mandating new courses in Internet safety. By taking this initiative New Yorkers show themselves to be thought leaders in the fast-paced online environment re-shaping our social landscape. Aimed at equipping kindergarteners up through high school seniors, this amendment is a major advance to help stem the rising tide of dangers to school children and cut the growing number of crimes that begin online.


Intended to educate and empower students by promoting safe use of the Internet, New York has provided that teachers will receive technical assistance to develop their curriculum. Among their goals are ensuring the material is age appropriate, developed according to the needs and abilities students acquire by each grade level.

i-SAFE Inc., the leader in Internet safety education, is able to participate in this new initiative, beginning with the country's largest school system. Partnering with the New York City School District, i-SAFE is providing learning assets to their 1,056,000 students. Combining the i-SAFE curriculum on Internet safety with the New York Department of Education pages, this Web service will provide educators from New York City a step-by-step guide to becoming certified to teach i-SAFE's comprehensive K-12 Internet safety curriculum.

In addition to instructing more than a million students, New York City educators can also become qualified to take the message deeper into the community. Once certified by i-SAFE as experts, educators may go on to present Internet safety professional development programs to other educators, parents, community leaders, and



law enforcement professionals. You can get started now. Go to our Web site and, in the "Quick Links" box, click i-LEARN Online. Create your own i-SAFE account and check out i-SAFE's comprehensive curriculum by visiting www.isafe.org.

The bottom line is by partnering with i-SAFE many students, educators, and several others will gain valuable new awareness and skills, in-depth information, and support. They will learn the signals of risky online behavior and how to make their Internet experience safe and enjoyable. 

NAC Tracks

Now that you've read the "Family Insider," i-SAFE's National Assessment Center (NAC) wants you to sound off.

Are you buying your child an iPod Nano, Zune, MP3 or PlayStation Portable this holiday season?

Yes or No

Vote here



"The problem with many youngsters today is not that they don't have opinions but that they don't have the facts on which to base their opinions."

~ Albert Shanker



Most Valuable Mentor – November 2006

*Dylan
Virginia*

It's a fact. Art can educate *and* motivate. Just ask our Most Valuable Mentor, Dylan, from Virginia. He is the grand prizewinner of the i-SAFE National Bumper Sticker contest. Dylan's design was chosen from more than 1,300 entries. It grabs your attention with a cartoon drawing and the warning to "keep personal data private." Dylan says he owes his inspiration to his dad.

"I get all my talent from Dad. He taught me everything I know about cartooning. He's also a middle school art teacher."

Dylan says designing his bumper sticker was more than just sitting down and drawing. He had to think first about some of the problems associated with being online and then translate those thoughts into art.

"The first thing I thought about was how frightening the Internet can be sometimes. So I drew that frightening thing popping out of the computer and scaring the kid. Then I had to get the picture on the bumper sticker size paper. Then I colored it and added the i-SAFE logo. The whole thing took about three days."

Dylan's bumper sticker warns against revealing personal information online. It's an important message. Being online is the same as being in public even though using the Internet at home may feel private and secure. Sometime you can reveal personal information on a profile page without even realizing it. Simple things, like the name of your school, the sports team you play for, where you hang out, what you like to do, can



reveal personal information that should be kept private. Think of the Internet as a giant billboard in Cyberspace that everyone can see anytime and anyplace. Dylan says that's the idea behind his design.

"Online predators can take advantage of kids who are trusting of everyone. Talk to an adult if you are not sure about an Internet site or conversation. If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't."

Good advice; he also has some for young artists.

"I suggest practicing drawing in your free time. Practice really does make perfect."

Dylan would like to become a professional artist some day and design his own comic strip. We'd say he is well on his way!



No Internet Without Tesla

Few inventors have had the impact on modern life that Nikola Tesla did. And you probably didn't even know his name. Public Broadcasting has a program covering Tesla's life and accomplishments. One of the greatest electrical inventors who ever lived, his technological achievements transformed America from a nation of isolated communities to a country connected by power grids where information was available upon demand. In the 20th century, it was Tesla's technology that united the United States and eventually the world. Click here for lesson plans and to see how our entire modern life was shaped by this one man's inventiveness.

http://www.pbs.org/tesla/prodo/po_whonikola.html





Ask An Expert—Too Much of a Good Thing?

This month's Ask An Expert draws on Stanford University's Psychiatrist Elias Aboujaoude who uncovered 'Net addicts.' Web overuse may be a growing problem.

Stanford University's new nationwide study surveyed 2,500 adults in the first scientific attempt to discover "Internet addiction." It found that between six and 14% of computer users said they went overboard, spending far too many hours glued to their screens checking e-mail, making blog entries, or visiting Web sites or chat rooms, often neglecting families, food, work, school, and sleep.

Psychiatrist Elias Aboujaoude, Stanford's team leader, was looking for signs of compulsion. "We worry when people use virtual interactions as substitutes for real social interactions. Their real relationships suffer as a result," he said.

Q. What are the tell-tale signs?

A. Sneaking out of bed to go online once your partner is asleep; missing deadline after deadline at work because you can't keep away from visiting your favorite chat rooms. The clincher: when you cut back on computer use, you feel irritable, anxious or restless. Those are red flags.

Q. How did you discover it was even a problem?

A. Over the last two to three years, more people have come in complaining saying, "I spend way too much time online, but I can't help it." They characterize it in terms that sound almost like a substance abuse problem.

Internet overuse is an easy trap, Aboujaoude notes, because computers offer immediacy, a sense of connection, and anonymity. Connections are increasingly fast and wireless, and getting online is easier and easier. Today it's not unusual to stop off at an Internet



café, use a Treo handheld computer to check your e-mail while waiting for your laptop to finish sending a work document. Some even reported they, "can't live without the Net. I wake up and it's the first thing I do. I do everything on the Net."

Q. How widespread is the problem?

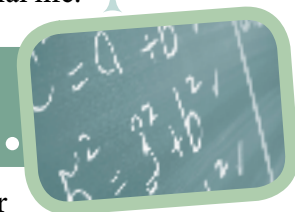
A. The survey suggests that it's not an isolated problem—it is relatively widespread, and deserves more attention. Gambling and pornography sites are just one part of the problem. Other sites—chat rooms, shopping venues and special-interest Web sites—are also proving impulsively habit-forming.

"The Internet," Aboujaoude concluded, "can be both helpful and isolating. It becomes a problem when it isolates, substituting for a real social life."

Curriculum Bonus—Safe Family Web Sites

The holiday season is fast approaching and many families are going high tech with their holiday letters, creating family Web sites to share pictures and news with loved ones around the world. This month's curriculum bonus is an information page to share with students who in turn should share it with their family. It covers basic safety guidelines for family Web sites and things to consider to keep the site safe and secure.

So grab this month's curriculum bonus here.





Did You Know?

Web Pioneers Envision A New Web Science

Just how big is the Web? How far-reaching is its influence on us? What new forms of human contact will we invent over the next five years? The social interactions that glue the World Wide Web together are now so complex, say some of its pioneering researchers, its dynamic scope now eclipses the narrow field of computer science.

“You can’t tell how a social phenomenon will spread just by looking at how the computer code works,” says Tim Berners-Lee. He invented the hypertext code that connected the first Web pages back in 1989 and now works as a researcher at MIT.

If we are to fully harness the Web’s potential, Berners-Lee says, “Web science,” a proposed new discipline, “simply must work off many disciplines at the same time. Incorporating the elements of social science, psychology, economics, and law, along with computer science and engineering is required in order to appreciate what the Web is becoming.”

i-SAFE knows this better than most. In our Internet safety education curriculum we focus on legal, social, psychological, and economic issues. That’s why we make you aware of the dangers of illegal downloading, the grooming tactics used by cyber predators, how to avoid being cyber bullied, and protecting yourself from identity theft. Safe Internet use is what will allow others to consider these loftier aims of what a Web science might yield.

Make it better


For example, they will study the ways social networks, blogs, e-commerce and government regu-



lation all contribute to the Web’s overall structure. This should help educators, parents, students, and businesses alike, say the initiative’s founders.


“We are doing this partly out of excitement, partly out of duty,” says Berners-Lee. “We have a duty to understand the Web because if we *can* make it better, we *should* make it better.”

Students who chose to study Web science may, for example, examine ways to make public information available through the Web while maintaining personal privacy. Or they might study how data that is spread over multiple servers can best be searched.

Ultimately, the aim is to create a new breed of scientist: “What we really want is for people around the world to start calling themselves Web scientists.” Maybe students in your class practice the foundations of Internet safety and are curious enough to be on their way to this very career. 

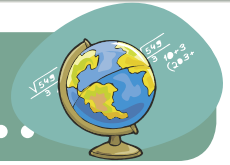
Online Newsletter Organizer

If you subscribe to a lot of e-mail newsletters, keeping track of the subscriptions can be a little hard. At some point you may want to quickly access the newsletter’s Web site to unsubscribe or to contact the publisher. So here’s a tip. Save the “Welcome” e-mail that you usually get when you subscribe. A good way to store these messages is to create a new e-mail folder.

When you subscribe to a newsletter, simply drag the “Welcome” e-mail into this folder for future reference. You can also take this a step further by creating subfolders inside the “Newsletter” folder. That way, you can drag and drop each unique welcome message into its specific newsletter subfolder. These subfolders can also act as handy searchable archives later. 



Nac Corner—NAC Report 2006



Where do you go to get the latest reliable data showing how safe American students and parents are online? i-SAFE Inc., through its National Assessment Center, is pleased to announce its annual research report.

During the past school year, approximately 170,300 students completed i-SAFE pre-assessments exploring their Internet-related beliefs and behaviors. Post-assessments measured the extent to which i-SAFE Internet safety education actually changed those beliefs and positively impacted behaviors. We asked some pretty sensitive questions, too. For instance, do millions of school-age American children possess naïve or sophisticated attitudes about their online safety? Are they engaging in one or two risky habits or a range of high-risk behaviors?


What we found was the vast majority of students are Internet users, often interacting with strangers online. One-half (50%) of students in grades 9-12 “talk” in chat rooms or use instant messaging (IM) with Internet strangers, while 25% of students in grades 5-8 do so. The full report is available from the i-SAFE Store. Go to www.isafe.org and click on the flash page.

You’ll want to know how high the number of students was in grades 5-12 who said they have met in person with someone they had originally met on the Internet. If you are a tech-savvy parent or teacher you may want to grade yourself against the results of how oblivious most parents are toward this risky behavior.

i-SAFE continues to press for Internet safety edu-



cation throughout the U.S. and the rest of the world. Protecting our children is our top priority, while keeping their Internet use safe and enjoyable. But when we find that children are still at risk of becoming targets of child predators or Cyber bullies because they share revealing personal information online in excessive amounts, we redouble our efforts.


Test your own knowledge. For instance, how many 3rd and 4th graders have their photos posted online? What uniquely identifying personal information are many older students revealing on their own Web pages or blogs? Answers to these questions and many more are in this year’s i-SAFE NAC Report. This is important information for any parent with underage children or any educator with students K-12 to update themselves with and keep handy to share with others. Order your copy today. 

Get Involved—Energize Your School

Teachers can encourage leadership in students through i-SAFE’s i-Adopt-A-School Program

Students in their teens can use a little help, sometimes, finding fun, innovative ways to bridge their youth with the adult world on the horizon. Suggest teaming up with i-SAFE to adopt a school. Your student will gain new confidence and important knowledge by becoming an i-MENTOR through i-SAFE’s Mentor Training.

Then comes the fun part. Learning through mentoring. All the materials they need are ready and waiting. Just get them started.

Think about it. How will it feel to have brought an important new level of empowerment to students in your school? Pretty good, we’d say. Tell your students to point their browsers to i-SAFE’s X-BLOCK and click the i-Adopt-A-School Program to find out more. 



Video Contest Tips – Seeing Through the Eye of the Camera

The first ever i-SAFE Video Skit Contest has already started. Teachers, it's not too late to encourage your students to get in on the action. Create a funny skit about online safety, record it on camera, and send it to i-SAFE.

If their skit is a hit, we'll feature it on the X-BLOCK Web site and i-DRiVE TV. It's simple, it's easy, and fun to watch. Here are a few tips to get them started.

FILMMAKING TIPS AND TRICKS



1. FRAMING

Avoid giving your subjects haircuts. Give your subjects a few inches of room above their heads.

1. AUDIO

Avoid unwanted background noise. Shoot your skit in a quiet location or tell others to hold the talking. *Duh...*

1. LIGHTING

Avoid dark video. Shoot daytime outdoors or use two or three directional lights if filming indoors. Keep the lights in front of your subject. Use a backlight to help your subjects stand out from the background.

FIND OUT MORE AT [HTTP://XBLOCK.ISAFE.ORG/KONTESTS.PHP.](http://xblock.isafe.org/contests.php)

Team Up With i-SAFE

i-SAFE has reached over 2.2 million students with Internet safety information. By providing free materials, programs, and educational videos, students are learning how to make positive choices while using Internet technology. In order to bring our programs and materials to your community and your home, we rely upon donations. To donate, e-mail donations@isafe.org or go to www.isafe.org/donations. 

We Value Your Input

Do you have a question? Please e-mail us at editor@isafe.org with questions, comments, or contributions. If snail mail is your preference, write to: i-SAFE Editor, 5900 Pasteur Ct. Ste. 100, Carlsbad, CA 92008

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 enables 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 effectively combine these elements. www.isafe.org