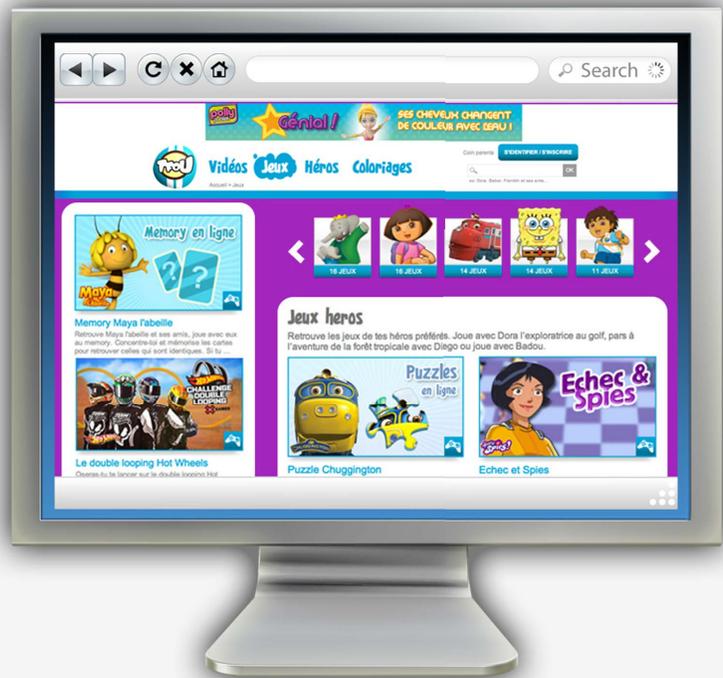


Protecting Your Kids Online

The Internet provides tremendous opportunities for your children, not only for learning but in developing their social life as well. However, with these opportunities also come risks. We discuss the top three risks facing your kids and what you can do to protect them.

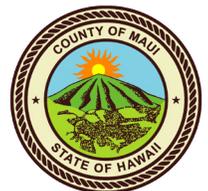


This newsletter is published by County of Maui, HI.

For more information, please contact us at:

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www.maui-county.gov/cybersecurity



Protecting Your Kids Online

We know and understand that security is not just an issue at work, but also at home. If you have children, they are most likely online. While we want them to develop the skills and experience they need to be successful in the 21st century, we also have to help protect them against today's cyber risks.

Just like in the real world, there are strangers that may attempt to physically or emotionally hurt our children. These types of predators often pretend to be someone else and try to build trust with children in places like online forums and games. Once they have this trust, they then exploit it for their own purposes.

Also just like the real world, your child's friends can be harmful. Just as you may have been bullied when you were a child, your kids may be bullied online. Other children may make fun of or harass your kids by posting mean comments on websites such as Facebook or sending harassing messages via mobile devices. You or your child may not even know who is posting these harassing messages.

The third and final risk is the children themselves. Children may often share too much information about themselves, which can lead to things such as identity theft or having their online accounts compromised. In addition, the personal information they share can impact their future when they get older. For example, college admissions or new employers often conduct background checks by seeing what information kids have posted about themselves online.

Fortunately, you can help protect your kids against these online risks by following some basic steps. We recommend the following:

- Be sure you and your children are talking about these risks. Make sure they are careful about whom they talk to and that they do not share any private information with others. Ensure your kids feel comfortable talking to you if they have any questions, are approached by strangers online or are the victim of cyber bullying. Ultimately, education, not technology, is the best defense for your children.
- Have a dedicated computer just for your children to use. This ensures they do not accidentally infect your computer, which you may use for confidential activities, such as online banking. In addition, have their computer in a public, high-traffic area so their activities can be monitored. Make sure your children do not have administrator rights on this computer and that it is properly secured.
- If your kids have mobile devices of their own, consider having a centralized charging station in your bedroom. Before your children go to bed at night, have all mobile devices placed at the charging station so your children are not tempted to use them when they should be sleeping.

Protecting Your Kids Online

- Establish some basic ground rules for online use, then have those rules posted by your kids' computer. The rules can include how long they can use the computer, who to report problems to and what they can or cannot do online.
- Finally, most operating systems include filtering and monitoring capabilities. If yours doesn't, or you want more advanced capabilities, you can purchase commercial software. Filtering allows you to control what your children can do online, such as what websites they can visit. This is especially effective to prevent younger children from accidentally accessing harmful content. Monitoring allows you to see what your children are doing, such as keeping track of which websites they visit.

We want to ensure that our kids are armed with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in the 21st century. By playing an active role in your children's online activities, you can help ensure they are safe and successful.



Social Media

Social networking sites, such as Facebook and Instagram, are a common concern for parents. These are sites where children interact with others online. They may share a tremendous amount of information about themselves. One way to protect your kids is to create your own account on these sites, then 'friend' or follow your children. You can then watch and monitor your children's online activities, including what they post and whom they are sharing information with. If you do not know how these sites work, ask your children to show you, let them become the teacher. This way, they not only show you what they are doing, but it also helps engage your kids at the same time. You may want to have additional rules for younger children, such as requiring they must get your permission before 'friending' anyone.

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