

**Title of Session:** Internet Access Issues and School Safety

**Moderator:** Nancy Willard

**Title of File:** 20040415internetsafety

**Date:** April 15, 2004

Room: After School Online Room

**BJ:** Nancy Willard's discussion will start shortly

**NancyEW** joined the room.

**BJ:** before we begin, let me remind new users to click on the ACTIONS menu in the top right of this chat window and highlight DETACH

**BJ:** Nancy leads a fast and furious discussion. Detach makes it a lot easier to read the text.

**BJ:** we usually start the discussions in Tapped In with brief introductions

**BJ:** I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a helpdesk volunteer for Tapped In

**BJ** . o O ( and a big fan of Nancy's )

**NancyEW:** I would like to know why you are interested in this topic

**EileenWi:** I am currently a student -University of Houston -going for my high school math certification.

**EileenWi:** I am just trying to get myself educated in the implementing technology -and its challenges

**BJ:** I am in favor of teaching children to be responsible users of internet resources...and feel that filters defeat that purpose.

**JeffC:** Education Technology Specialist... always interested in anything related to the Net.

**VanthuGst1:** Hi, I am a student at Akron U. I want to know how about school safety plans in using Internet. How can you prevent students from going into unwanted sites?

**ChristineE** joined the room.

**BJ:** welcome, Christine. We're just doing introductions

**BJ** . o O ( and telling Nancy what we hope to get out of the discussion )

**JeffC:** Actually... I'm more interested in alternative to (what I see as ) ineffective software filters.

**ChristineE:** I am so confused about safe searches for images for students.

**NancyEW:** I have been working on issues of internet use and Internet ue plans since 1995. Recently, I have begun to think that we are leaving a very important part out of the picture. Under the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act most school districts develop School Safety Plans. There are many aspects of Internet use that are directly related to Internet use. But it is my impression that Internet use planning and school safety planning are not coordinated.

**NancyEW:** So I would like to start an exploration of the degree to which you think Internet issues are being addressed in a coordinated manner with safety planning.

**NancyEW:** We can also discuss filtering, which is a component of the picture. But does anyone have any initial thoughts or coordinating Internet and safety planning

**ChristineE:** I don't think the Powers that Be ever considered linking the two. In my opinion, we need to catch up to technology in our global thinking.

**BJ** shudders at the thought...I recently heard a speaker addressing bullying..which is a big school safety issue

**NancyEW:** As is cyberbullying.

**BJ:** he said that he recently spoke with the guidance counselors at Columbine...

**BJ:** and they were relieved to see the school getting back to normal...

DonitaB joined the room.

**BJ:** and they were referring to students bullying each other!

**NancyEW:** But also there are safety issues of access to drug sites, access to information on weapons, suicide, hate sites, use of Internet telecommunications for drug dealing

**NancyEW:** How about from your perspective Jeff, do you interface with the school safety folks?

**BJ:** looks like enough for several discussions, Nancy!

**ChristineE:** All of these are concerns to me. Last week a student was researching assault weapons and stalking on the net at school.

**NancyEW:** And what was his purpose for such research?

**NancyEW:** I am hoping Jeff will jump in with some interface between tech folks and safety folks,

**EileenWi:** I have yet to be in a school; but these are also my concerns - I do not want to be ignorant in these areas -

**VanthuGst1:** But to minimize student in searches, how would they learn. If teacher minimize students to a certain site without given them the chance to explore, they will not be able to learn how to search.

**ChristineE:** We're not really sure. It wasn't an assignment. He didn't have permission from his classroom teacher to be in the media center. However, due to the nature of the search and the student's reputation, the assistant principal handled it. I would have preferred to handle it myself. I may have found the answer to your question.

**EileenWi:** whose responsibility is it to monitor such inappropriate activities?

**NancyEW:** But the first let's discuss some of the issues around filtering. I have been conducting some research on filters and have developed a test for their accuracy in preventing access to the kinds of sites that we would not want students to be accessing -- even the most liberal of educators. I can provide this test to folks. But basically, I will tell you that all of the results so far indicate great level of fallibility. 62% of the porn sites on the first 3 pages of a search for "cheerleader" were not blocked in the filter I tested

**ChristineE:** I would like to have your test. I was following the thread on LM\_Net yesterday.

**NancyEW:** Additionally, it simply is not possible to use filters to gain any manner of control over communications.

**NancyEW:** If you send me an e-mail, I will send it to you. But additionally of concern with the one filter I tested, advocacy, support sites for gay/lesbian teens are blocked but not anti-homosexuality sites, pro-choice blocked, pro-life, not.

**VanthuGst1:** When I search yahoo, I filter out the porn sites by telling it to exclude any site that have the word (sorry first) sex, gay, lesbian, and xxx. out. It helps a lot.

**NancyEW:** So one basic issue that we need to be addressing in schools is how to help kids learn how to do searches in a manner that they will avoid accidentally accessing material that is not what they want (or not what they should) see. But I do not think this is fully appropriate instruction for elementary students, so my perspective is that they

should use the Internet in "walled gardens" openly accessing sites that have been previewed

**ChristineE:** Are you suggesting pathfinders done by the teachers or librarians or sites like Nettekker?

**NancyEW:** Yes, and services like Kidlib.

**NancyEW:** But let's get back to a more basic concern. When I say "safe Internet use" many people immediately presume that I am talking about kids accessing porn. Are these all of the issues we should be concerned about/ Are there more? and how are schools doing in addressing these

**VanthuGst1:** Chat room can be very dangerous

**NancyEW:** How are schools handling chat?

**EileenWi:** when you say "schools" who are you referring to? teachers, administration, parents?? or everyone

**BJ:** I think most schools block chat...easiest way to deal...or not deal...with the issue

**VanthuGst1:** I don't know if they are allowed to enter chat room at school.

**JeffC:** For the most part... most schools don't allow it as BJ says... I think Tapped In has handled the concerns with the system they have here.

**NancyEW:** How can we help deal with those dangers in an educational manner, rather than by simply thinking we have addressed the concern by blocking chat at school?

**VanthuGst1:** I think we should warn them to not to believe what the other person on-line says, and not to give out important information.

**BJ:** one way is to access chat's that are appropriate like epals...and Tapped In

**MichaelKi** joined the room.

**BJ:** right, Vanthu...that's also important

**BJ:** Hi, Michael. Welcome

**JeffC:** By making chat secure, safe, logged, and not anonymous... all of which they have here.

**NancyEW:** BTW there are several concerns about chat, from my perspective? contact with predators, sexual trolling, disclosure of personal information, and bullying

**EileenWi:** I suppose, if chats are used, could they be printed, or have the transcript forwarded to teacher...

**BJ:** Eileen, that is how the chats are in the Tapped In Student Campus

**NancyEW:** There are very excellent ways to use chat in a safe environment for education, but kids are not always in a safe environment when they use the Internet at home and many are seeking the unsafe chat rooms just because they want a broader experience

**JeffC:** What gets me is how administrators are generally cavalier about not allowing chat in their schools... like it's not needed. Yet imagine a classroom where there is \*no talking allowed period\*.

**EileenWi:** chats - could be a powerful sharing tool - meeting with students in a different state or country to learn about something together

**JeffC:** If students were pointed to safe environments... and allowed to use them in schools... then they would be less likely to use unsafe environments at home.

**NancyEW:** Which goes to the underlying concern that administrators, in particular, are making decisions about technology without really understanding the ramifications related

to possible really good educational purposes and without an understanding of the very real safety concerns.

**GradyM** joined the room.

**JeffC**: Administrators think outright banning is the safest solution... and that filters are the safest solution... neither thoughts are correct.

**NancyEW**: Most of the "teen online community" environments that I have visited concern me, because their audience is 13 to 29. Said as a mother of a 12 year old

**NancyEW**: shudder

**MichaelKi**: I agree with Nancy's concern. Even if the community is for "teens" there is little assurance that only teens will be there

**JeffC**: Most of those communities don't have the safeguards that Tapped In has created.

**ChristineE**: I have similar concerns with blogging for kids. Nothing is monitored...

**EileenWi**: what is "blogging"

**NancyEW**: One of the reasons I am trying to get school folks to really test their filters is that it can point out to administrators the false security. But in one case a tech director tested, found the filter was really flawed and is now in search of a "better mouse-trap."

**JeffC**: The better mousetrap is getting a decent IUA (Internet Usage Agreement) in place

**NancyEW**: Blogging is online personal diaries -- which others can respond to. Concerns: disclosure of personal information of self and others, sexual trolling,

**JeffC**: ... and seeing that students take responsibility for their own actions... not relying on an outside filter to do it for them.

**ChristineE**: Online journaling sites. If you do a search, you will find many sites. I have looked for safe blogging for students but can not tell if it's safe or not.

**NancyEW**: I also think a better mousetrap is better monitoring. And adequate enforcement of the use agreement

**JeffC**: exactly

**EileenWi**: what are the consequences of not following such an agreement

**NancyEW**: Many blogging sites become gossip sites and can be really harmful to kids, Cyberbullying is taking the bullying that has traditionally occurred at school and making it 24/7 and global

**JeffC**: usually withdrawal of net privileges

**JeffC**: I'm in favor of using the stocks or pillory

**ChristineE**: I always thought the agreement was just a disclaimer.... but really it's a "dishonor" system.

**JeffC**: public ridicule

**NancyEW**: Btw, I am working on a cyberbullying book and just developed a cyberbullying needs assessment survey for use in schools. I would really like to have some folks in schools to have students complete this survey. I have human subjects issues addressed and the like. If you send me an e-mail I will send the material to you.

**ChristineE**: Nancy, how can I get your e-mail?

**NancyEW**: The most important aspect of discipline around internet misuse is a consequence that focuses the student's attention on the reasons why the behavior was inappropriate -- and ensures the student cures any harm caused

**MichaelKi**: How does cyberbullying work? I mean, isn't it a lot easier for kids to avoid a cyberbully than a real bully? It sounds fascinating.

**NancyEW**: [nwillard@csriu.org](mailto:nwillard@csriu.org) <http://csriu.org>

**JeffC:** virtually every high school has kids setting up bulletin boards somewhere to "chat" about school... this is a mixed blessing... schools have basically tried to "control" this... without much success... I think it's time that educators understand that the word "control" should be replaced with "awareness"

**VanthuGst1:** How can anyone control something like that? Being aware, I don't think it helps either.

**NancyEW:** Cyberbullying is sending or posting harmful or cruel text or graphics through the internet or mobile technologies. I have developed a classification system. that includes flaming, harassment, stalking, denigration, outing,. masquerade, and relationship aggression

**CraigN:** If you don't feel that filters have a place in schools or at home, how do you plan to stop the innocent access of porn sites such as whitehouse.com (instead of whitehouse.gov) or good sites that have been bookmarked but then "porn napped." I, as a parent, would be upset if these were accidental accesses were not prevented in a school setting.

**JeffC:** Oh... awareness is important... if kids knew their \*parents\* were looking at the boards they were... there might be less cyberbullying... but right now most administrators/parents/educators are oblivious as to what the kids are doing online.

**NancyEW:** The filters I have tested and those tested by others do not prevent this. They only offer false security.

**JanGst4:** What happened to the legislation they were talking about last month with the separate part of the internet for porn?

**CraigN:** Courts have ruled that schools cannot enforce discipline policies if students use their own computers, their own Internet access, and their own web sites. We refer situations like this to the local police dept or have the parents make a civil case of it.

**NancyEW:** oblivious is right. so for cyberbullying, I think the first issue is raising the awareness of parents and educators.

**JeffC:** I was actually involved in a sitenapping case... I made about six months of calls to my congressman... and legislation was adopted to prevent porn sites from snapping up expired domains.

**CraigN:** When we find out about an inappropriate site or post by a student, we make their parents aware of it. Some punish the child, some don't care.

**NancyEW:** I still think there is lots that schools can do -- short of discipline -- to address offcampus cyberbullying. But Craig is right, the free speech implications present difficulties

**ChristineE:** I also have concerns about image searches. I know you can't filter images at all..... but image are often innocently searched and then inappropriate thumbnails come up. Some schools block images completely. What else can we do?

**JeffC:** google filters image searches

**JanGst4:** NOT

**ChristineE:** Not really....

**MichaelKi:** Yeah google's filter seems to work well

**NancyEW:** I have not yet figured out a good recommendation regarding image searches. I do not think it is at all safe to allow image searches at the elementary grades

**JeffC:** if you set google for safe surfing... it can be done... not 100%

**JanGst4:** Naked ladies all over my classroom with google!

**ChristineE:** Not on XP. I heard it works better on Windows 98

**NancyEW:** Try a good search on a word for a sexual body part

**JeffC:** what are they searching for Jan?

**NancyEW:** If they are in middle school -- probably naked ladies

**MichaelKi:** haha

**JeffC:** and what does your IUA say about doing such a search?

**NancyEW:** And since they know they can get away with it, they do

**ChristineE:** In my opinion there is no filtering on google..... if what we're getting is a safe search, I don't want to see anything else..... and I'm not easily shocked.

**CraigN:** We had a case today where the search was for "swallow" - the bird. Got a really bad site that we had "filtered" in minutes.

**ChristineE:** One student searched Marco Polo for a school project. Granted he went to the 12 page for the "best portrait" but he got a real education

**JeffC:** my suggested solution to congress was really quite simple... don't allow porn on .com... give them their own .sex or .xxx domains... but they didn't want to deal with the free speech issues.

**CraigN:** iSafe has good information to share with parents and students.

**NancyEW:** One thing I recommend is better monitoring. I hate to name just one company, because I usually do not promote products, but I like the Vericept system because it does an intelligent analysis of internet traffic and report only on use that is suspected to be in violation of the policy. Then all you have to do is have the administrator follow through

**ChristineE:** What is the Vericept System?

**NancyEW:** My perspective of iSafe is that it is far too simplistic. I think that \$8.5 million from Congress should have purchased a bit more. They did not use any of the authorities who I think they should have in the development -- far too simplistic

**CraigN:** So even though you don't support filtering, you do support monitoring? Won't that miss just as many sites as a filter might?

**EileenWi:** is this a software package

**CraigN:** A web site. I agree it is too simplistic, but we use it and then supplement it. Gives teachers a starting point, better than nothing.

**JeffC:** software costs \$\$\$.. monitoring software costs \$\$\$ (like NetOp School)... anything that costs basically is a hindrance... best monitoring policy is to have a room in a horseshoe design so that all monitors are physically visible.

**NancyEW:** Vericept is a system (do not ask me technical questions) that reviews all Internet traffic and does an intelligent analysis of the text in context to detect patterns that suggest misuse. Fits privacy standards because it only reports when there is a reason for the suspicion. Agreed on the design of the computer lab

**EileenWi:** back to the basics

**CraigN:** But you are talking about a lab setup - what about in the library and individual classrooms. And what about wireless laptops that are springing up everywhere.

**SuzanneH** joined the room.

**NancyEW:** well, let get even more basic -- the most important thing to do to address safe and responsible use is making sure that teachers know how to lead kids on really exciting online learning adventures.

**VanthuGst1:** With all the money cut, I don't think school can afford filtering software. I think with search such as the name of birds, we could attach the word bird to it also so that it the sites are actually about birds.

**MichaelKi:** I agree with Jeff-- spend the money on teachers or teacher aides who can actually monitor and talk to the kids about it.

**JeffC:** still can set up your room so that the laptops are visible

**CraigN:** And laptop schools where every student in a grade has a wireless laptop all day long.

**NancyEW:** OK folks, we are coming to the end of this discussion. It seems BJ wants to keep me around for monthly discussions. What are some of the safe and responsible use issues you would want to discuss?

**MichaelKi:** Thanks for everyone's great ideas.

**JeffC:** it really comes down to the fact that students from day one are not encouraged to taking responsibility for their own education... and until they are... they will feel justified in trying to get away with stuff.

**NancyEW:** You are not off the hook Michael -- what else do you want to discuss

**BJ** doesn't think she's the ONLY one who wants Nancy back!!!

**ChristineE:** I really want to know more about image searches. Can we discuss this again? Soon?

**JeffC:** Christine... check the settings in Google

**NancyEW:** BTW, there are 9 publishers with my book proposal for the book Raising Cyber Savvy Kids sitting on their desk

**MichaelKi:** I would be interested in hearing more about cyber-bullying and how students interact on the web.

**ChristineE:** Sounds great.... someone should pick it up.... soon. Parents and teachers need it.

**NancyEW:** And the focus is on promoting kids to take responsibility

**JeffC:** And that is something that needs to transcend tech

**EileenWi:** thank you for the great education! good luck Nancy

**BJ:** Thanks, Nancy. I'll be in touch about your session for next month.

**CraigN:** Thanks, bye.

**NancyEW:** I am writing a book on cyberbullying right now I am in discussions with a publisher. As I noted, perhaps before you came in, I am trying to make connections with folks who might have students complete a cyberbullying survey. If you get this done in time, we could use this for a discussion

**VanthuGst1:** Thank you, it was a nice discussion.

**JeffC:** Unfortunately... our political pendulum has swung the other direction... with the emphasis on testing... standards... benchmarks... not really focusing on the student centered environment... which indeed... I think constructivism does address (certainly in the teaching colleges)... but I fear it will be some time till that happens.

**ChristineE:** Thanks, Nancy. I'll email you for test and other info.

**NancyEW:** Thanks to everyone. I learn as much from these discussions as I hope I contribute