Safer Internet Day 2021

Every year since 2005, schools in more than 150 countries across the world have supported Safer Internet Day, which provides schoolchildren and school staff with information on how to stay safe online. It aims to raise awareness of current online issues and to help young people look after their wellbeing and safety when using the Internet. This year's event is being held on Tuesday 9th February 2021.

Different each year, in 2021, the Safer Internet Day theme is 'An Internet we trust: exploring reliability in the online world'. This has been chosen to highlight the importance of questioning the reliability and trustworthiness of what we see online by asking, what is accurate and what is fictitious?

An Internet We Trust: Exploring Reliability in the Online World

The online world is an incredible fount (source) of information: - it presents opportunities to research, learn new facts or skills and can even broaden viewpoints for people of all ages. The Internet is also an important way for young people to connect and experience positive relationships - to play, interact and share their lives with their peers. However, young people should approach the online world with some caution as they navigate around it and should be constantly making decisions about who and what to trust in the context of playing games together and socialising online.

Safer Internet Day gives young people the chance to develop the skills they need to be able to make the best decisions as they navigate an online world, where everything is not always as it seems. The 2021 campaign will focus on showing young people how to decide what they can trust on the Internet, as well as supporting them to question, challenge and improve the online world. They want to create a supportive yet critical and questioning environment, which encourages debate and discussion.

Once they are more confident at separating fact from fiction, it is crucial that they feel comfortable to speak out against harmful and misleading content online and to take the next steps in helping to create an Internet full of trustworthy and reliable information.

Did You Know...?

Globally, over 4.6 billion people are regular Internet users according to a study from October 2020. This encompasses approximately 59% of the global population.



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Everything Is Not Always as It Seems

Photos

People tend to share the prettiest, happiest pictures of themselves online to try and portray (show) the kind of life (and person) they want to be. However, many photos often embellish (exaggerate) real life. Images of other people's (carefully chosen) so-called, perfect lives can sometimes leave you feeling down. Try not to compare yourself; remembering that these photos probably don't tell the whole story.

Fake News

Despite the Internet being a great source of news and information for young people, we should not always believe everything we read. Worryingly, the online world also contains inaccurate content and fake news. Fake news is false information that is published under the pretence of being trustworthy and reliable news.

Sometimes, completely false stories are deliberately published to make people believe something untrue or to get lots of people to visit a website. There are also stories that have some truth to them but are not entirely accurate. This is because the journalists or bloggers writing them don't check all the facts before publishing the story or they might exaggerate some of it.

Phony and fabricated information can be incredibly harmful as it can influence and persuade our decisions, actions, views and opinions, as well as what we share online. It also destroys the trust we have of people in the media, many of whom are in fact reporting honestly.

Safer Internet Day 2021 will look at why inaccurate content exists, where it comes from and how young people can manage it.

Reducing Screen Time

If you find yourself spending a lot of time online and even thinking about it when you're offline, then you probably need to reduce your screen time. While the Internet can be fun, there's a whole world out there, waiting to be explored. Make sure you take regular breaks away from electronic devices. It's all about striking a good balance.



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Our Use of the Internet

Many people across the world are using the Internet in their daily lives. We can use the Internet in a multitude of different ways. For example, here are some online activities that people enjoy:

- listening to music
- watching humorous videos (and making their own ones)
- chatting with friends
- using apps to keep in touch with family who live far away
- gaming (and watching walk-throughs of other people gaming)

How do you like to use the Internet?

Staying Safe Online

The Internet is an incredibly powerful and convenient tool that can be accessed at all times of day or night, through devices within hand's reach. However, staying safe online by looking after ourselves and each other is very important.

It is sadly not uncommon for young people, when in a group chat or playing an online game or another activity, to see or hear something that causes worry, confusion or unease. Fortunately, if this happens, there are ways to report the problem so that it is less likely to happen again. For example, many apps and games have 'Report', 'Help' or 'Block' buttons. 'Report' can help us to report anything that makes us feel unsafe or unhappy. 'Help' is if you have a problem with an app and 'Block' is useful if you don't want to receive any more messages from someone. Saving evidence (such as a picture or a message) can also be useful.



Most importantly, we should tell an adult if we feel worried, confused, unsafe or unhappy about anything that happens while online.

The Internet is an amazing place to be creative, chat with friends and find interesting, fun stuff. Safer Internet Day 2021 wants to celebrate the amazing range of information and opportunities online, and it's potential to inform, connect and inspire young people while also being safe, sensible and able to separate fact from fiction.

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Questions

1. What are the aims of Safer Internet Day?

2. Mark whether the statements are true or false.

	True	False
Safer Internet Day started in 2005.	☐	☐
This year's event is being held on Tuesday 9th February 2021.	☐	☐
The Safer Internet Day 2021 theme is 'An Internet we can rely on: exploring trustworthy content online'	☐	☐
You should believe everything you read on the Internet.	☐	☐

3. ...**young people should approach the online world with some caution**.
   What is meant by this?

4. Describe the **two** different types of fake news that can be published on the Internet and why journalists or bloggers write them.

5. Find and copy a word that means the same as 'fake' and 'fictitious'.

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6. **Watching humorous videos...**

   The word 'humorous' suggests that the videos are...

   Tick one.

   - important
   - unnecessary
   - funny
   - hurtful

7. Describe the buttons that can help users to stay safe online.
   Support your answer with evidence from the text.

8. What percentage of the global population are online?

9. Your friend is worried they have been spending too much time online recently. What advice would you give to them and why?

10. Why do you think it is important for us all to learn about staying safe online and exploring reliability in the online world?

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