



9 out of 10 Parents Think They Should Have a Lot of Responsibility for Ensuring Kids' Internet Safety; One-Third Think They Are "Very Knowledgeable" About How To Do It

71 Percent of Parents Think Schools Should Have a Lot of Responsibility for Ensuring Kids' Online Safety

Parents feel they have a lot of responsibility for ensuring kids have safe online experiences; most parents feel schools also have a lot of responsibility.

- According to July 2006 research commissioned by Cable in the Classroom, parents or legal guardians of children ages 8-18 think a lot of the burden for ensuring children's safety on the Internet belongs to parents or guardians (90%).¹
- Seven in ten parents (71%) feel that a lot of the responsibility should fall to schools.²
- About half of parents (49%) believe a lot of the responsibility to ensure children have safe experiences on the Internet should fall to government and law enforcement agencies.³

While most parents are taking some steps to educate their kids about how to use the Internet safely and responsibly, most parents do not feel very knowledgeable about how to help.

- According to July 2006 research commissioned by Cable in the Classroom, the vast majority of parents or legal guardians of 8-18 year olds (94%) have taken some steps to ensure that their children use the Internet safely and responsibly.⁴
- Most commonly, parents have talked to their child about safe and responsible use of the Internet (88%), and have monitored their child's online activities (82%). Three in four parents (75%) have limited Internet use at home to the family room or other open space, and a similar proportion of parents (74%) have set time limits on their child's use of the Internet. Just over half (55%) have installed software to limit or block their child's online activities and (54%) have sought advice from other parents.⁵

FACT SHEET

PTA Back-to-School
Media Briefing

August 10, 2006



MORE >

- Though most parents (94%) have taken steps to ensure their child's safety online, and the majority of parents say that they are at least somewhat knowledgeable (90%) when it comes to educating their child about how to use the Internet safely and responsibly, only one in three parents (34%) feel they themselves are very knowledgeable about this issue.⁶
- One in ten parents (10%) report being not at all knowledgeable about how to educate their children about how to use the Internet safely and responsibly.⁷

While schools are concerned about ensuring kids use the Internet safely and responsibly, there is more schools could do in partnership with parents.

- According to March 2006 research commissioned by Cable in the Classroom, K-12 public school educators are well aware that kids spend several hours a day outside of school watching, listening to and interacting with technology and media for any purpose, including TV, radio, iPods, video games, computers and the Internet. Educators estimate that elementary school students in their class(es) use technology and media outside of school an average of 3.8 hours a day, their middle school students 4.9 hours a day, and their high school students 5.1 hours a day.⁸
- While the majority of classroom teachers feel they are primarily responsible for teaching kids the 21st century skills they need to make best use of the Internet – often called “media literacy” or “information literacy” – the majority (60%) think the teaching of these skills in their schools is emphasized less than it should.⁹
- Like parents, teachers may not be very knowledgeable about how to ensure students use the Internet safely and responsibly. The vast majority of teachers (78%) report learning about media literacy skills primarily on their own.¹⁰
- Parents are looking for advice from schools on how to ensure their

children use the Internet safely and responsibly. According to July 2006 research commissioned by Cable in the Classroom, about four in ten parents (42%) have sought advice on the topic from their child's school.¹¹

Today's kids tend to be active, tech-savvy Internet users, going online from home, school, and many other locations.

- The vast majority of kids use the Internet. According to 2004 data collected by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 87% of all teens (ages 12 to 17) use the Internet.¹² In fact, teens are even more likely to use the Internet than the average adult (87% vs. 73%).¹³ Other recent research suggests that the use of the Internet among younger children is substantial and growing.¹⁴
- Kids who go online tend to use the Internet frequently. Half (51%) of all online teens use the Internet daily; 24% report using the Internet several times a day.¹⁵
- Kids tend to be more tech-savvy than the adults in their lives. More than 8 in 10 online teens (82%) report helping adults to do something online that they were not able to do themselves.¹⁶ Tech-savvy kids also report being more knowledgeable than their teachers.¹⁷
- Kids access the Internet from a variety of locations: Of those who go online, 87% of teens have gone online at home; 78% from school; 74% from someone else's house (like a friend or relative's house); and 54% from a library.¹⁸

Kids routinely create and share content and information with other Internet users.

- Like adults (but at greater rates), kids use the Internet as a vehicle to create and share content with others. According to 2004 data collected by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, half of all teens (ages 12 to 17) create content



for the Internet, such as creating blogs; creating personal webpages or webpages for school or friends; sharing original content like artwork, photos, stories, or videos online; or remixing content found online into new creations.¹⁹

- According to 2006 data collected by Teenage Research Unlimited, 61% of teens with online access (ages 13 to 17) have a personal profile on social networking sites, such as MySpace, Friendster, or Xanga, and half have posted pictures of themselves online.²⁰ This is especially striking given that the most popular social networking site on the Internet, MySpace, only just launched in July 2003.

Parents have generally positive views of the value of the Internet for their children, though they also express concerns related to their children's safe and responsible use of the Internet.

- According to 2004 data collected by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, two-thirds of parents of teens (ages 12 to 17) feel that the Internet has overall been a good thing for their child, and a large majority of parents (80%) feel that the Internet helps teens do better in school.²¹
- At the same time, most parents (82%) feel teens are not careful enough about the information they give out about themselves online and that teens are doing things online they wouldn't want their parents to know about (65%).²²

Endnotes

- 1 Harris Interactive (www.harrisinteractive.com) conducted a telephone survey on behalf of Cable in the Classroom between July 27 and July 31, 2006 among a nationwide cross section of 374 U.S. adults ages 18 and over who are parents or legal guardians of a child ages 8 – 18. Figures for age, sex, race, and region were weighted where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a sampling error of plus or minus 5 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.
- 2 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 3 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 4 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 5 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 6 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 7 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 8 Grunwald Associates (www.grunwald.com) conducted an online survey on behalf of Cable in the Classroom in March 2006 of a nationwide cross section of 1,045 U.S. full-time classroom teachers of core subject areas and library/media specialists in K-12 public schools. Inherent in any statistical inference is random error associated with the findings. For a sample size of 1,045, the random error of any percentage based on this sample size is about $\pm 3\%$ at the 95% confidence level.
- 9 Grunwald Associates/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 10 Grunwald Associates/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 11 Harris Interactive/Cable in the Classroom, *Ibid.*
- 12 Lenhart, A. Madden, M., Hitlin, P., *Teens and Technology: Youth are Leading the Transition to a Fully Wired and Mobile Nation*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, July 27, 2005. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Tech_July2005web.pdf
- 13 Pew Internet & American Life Project, February 15 – April 6, 2006 Tracking Survey. http://www.pewinternet.org/trends/User_Demo_4.26.06.htm [April 26, 2006 update].
- 14 Project Tomorrow, *Our Voices, Our Future: Student and Teacher Views on Science, Technology & Education. National Report on NetDay's 2005 Speak Up Event*. Irvine, CA: Project Tomorrow, April 2006. http://www.netday.org/SPEAKUP/pdfs/SpeakUpReport_05.pdf; Roberts, D., Foehr, U., and Rideout, V., *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, March 2005. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905pkg.cfm>; Rideout, V., Vandewater, E., and Wartella, E., *Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation, Fall 2003. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/3378.cfm>
- 15 Lenhart, Madden, and Hitlin, *Ibid.*
- 16 Pew Internet & American Life Project. Parents and Teens 2004 Survey, Final Topline (12/14/2004). http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teen_Questions.pdf
- 17 Levin, D. and Arafeh, S. *The Digital Disconnect: The Widening Gap Between Internet Savvy Students and Their Schools*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, August 14, 2002. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Schools_Internet_Report.pdf
- 18 Lenhart, Madden, and Hitlin, *Ibid.*
- 19 Lenhart, A. Horrigan, J. and Fallows, D., *Content Creation Online*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, February 29, 2004. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Content_Creation_Report.pdf; Lenhart, A. and Madden, M. *Teen Content Creators and Consumers*. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, November 2, 2005. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Teens_Content_Creation.pdf
- 20 Teenage Research Unlimited. *Teen Internet Safety Survey*. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Cox Communications, 2006. http://www.netismartz.org/pdf/cox_teensurvey_may2006.pdf
- 21 Hitlin, P. and Rainie, L. *Teens, Technology, and School*. Data Memo. Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, August 2005. http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Internet_and_schools_05.pdf
- 22 Hitlin and Rainie, *Ibid.*