

# Chapter 2:

## About the Internet

### EDUCATOR FACILITATION GUIDE

#### PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To provide practical tips and instructions for engaging students and handling discussions on the topic of the internet.

#### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To inform students about how the internet connects people everywhere, making it easy for anyone to access any information, person, or content, including things that can be harmful.
- ▶ To educate students about the potential risks and harms associated with internet use.
- ▶ To help students understand the importance of having trusted adults involved.

#### AGE CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ While many kids in this age group are online, they have overall had less exposure to the harsh realities of crime, criminals, and harm that can occur online.
- ▶ It is near impossible to avoid inappropriate content online, even when it comes to searching something innocent on a search engine. It has become common for children to come across pornography and other harmful content at an early age. This chapter encourages students to tell a trusted adult if they ever come across something inappropriate or something that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- ▶ Children at this age may still see adults, including those online, as inherently trustworthy. It is important to emphasize that not everyone online is who they say they are, and that it is necessary to always check with a trusted adult before engaging with new people or new platforms online.
- ▶ While the concept of the internet is abstract, kids at this age are concrete thinkers and require tangible examples. For this reason, we use visual representations to show the reach of the internet.
- ▶ In line with this theme, it is important to simplify information by comparing it to real-life scenarios. Therefore, we use animation to illustrate what it looks like when there are no guardrails online and facilitate kids to feel the sense of fear that can arise without these protections.

## ABOUT THE TOPIC

- ▶ Before starting this session, provide a disclaimer to the class: “Today, we will be discussing the internet and online safety. I recognize that every family has different rules regarding internet access and use. It is important to respect these differences. Our goal in the discussions we will be having is to learn how to use the internet safely and understand its potential dangers.”
- ▶ The internet is a virtual space connecting billions of people and their devices worldwide. It allows us to quickly send and receive information and connect with others. We use it for many things: looking up information, learning, social media, gaming, consuming media, and interacting with others. It’s a different form of reality that comes with its own risks and dangers.
- ▶ There are over 5.47 billion active internet users.
- ▶ In this age group, kids will mostly use the online space for connecting and communicating with their peers, gaming, or viewing media. Some of them may engage in livestream conversations on dangerous platforms like Omegle, and some may even come across pornography.
- ▶ 86% of Canadian children ages 9 to 11 have an account on at least one platform that requires users to be 13 or older. (<https://mediasmarts.ca/press-centre/press-releases/new-research-reveals-online-lives-youth-during-pandemic>)
- ▶ Half of the children aged between 7-11 years were reported to have a mobile device such as a smartphone. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1319950/canada-mobile-usage-kids-and-teens-by-age/>)
- ▶ 4 in 5 (79%) Canadian kids played at least one online video game in 2024. (<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/mtm-jr-releases-its-2024-data-on-canadian-kids-media-and-technology-habits-828510626.html>)
- ▶ The most popular platforms used by minors are: Youtube, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, Roblox, Fortnite, Minecraft, Instagram, Kik, and Pinterest.
- ▶ Almost half of Canadian kids aged 7 to 17 (48%) have used Snapchat. (<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/mtm-jr-releases-its-2024-data-on-canadian-kids-media-and-technology-habits-828510626.html>)
- ▶ Basic internet safety rules include not sharing personal information, using safe websites with parental permission, avoiding clicking pop up ads, not sending money to anyone, and asking a trusted adult for help when unsure.
- ▶ Identifying which apps, games, or platforms pose a risk involves considering several factors: the number of minors using them, whether they allow chat functions with strangers, the ability to upload and share photos, access to livestreaming, and claims about making photos disappear or keeping them private.
- ▶ A “Digital Footprint” is the term used to convey that everything we do online can stay there forever.

## SUPPORTIVE MATERIALS



To access the following resources, scan the QR code or [click here](#).

### Supplementary Videos for Students

- ▶ Being Safe Online
- ▶ Cybersmart Detectives
- ▶ Being Safe on the Internet

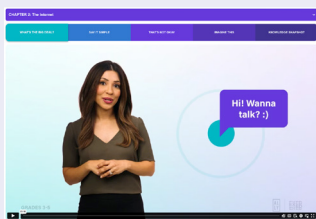
### Supportive Resources for Educators

- ▶ Digital and Media Literacy Toolkit
- ▶ Personal Safety and Healthy Child Development
- ▶ MediaSmarts Teacher Resources
- ▶ GetCyberSafe.Ca
- ▶ Zoe & Molly Online

## GUIDING DISCUSSION

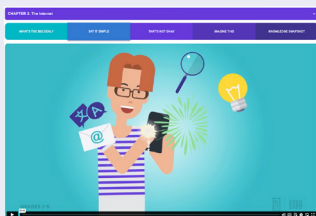
- ▶ Use inclusive language and terminology that acknowledges these issues can affect individuals of any gender, and ensure the tone remains non-judgmental.
- ▶ Identify any local support resources and organizations on the issue ahead of time, so that you can readily refer students who may need additional support.
- ▶ Providing the class with an anonymous question box might help the students who may not feel comfortable asking important questions.
- ▶ If a question is inappropriate or derails the discussion, gently redirect it back to the main topic.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, it's okay to admit it! Provide additional resources or take note to look into the question later.

## FACILITATION TIPS FOR CHAPTER 2



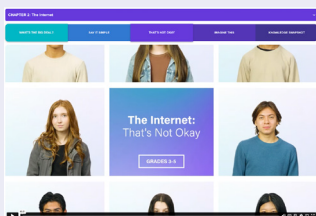
### What's the Big Deal?

Start the chapter with an engaging icebreaker activity to get the students excited about exploring the internet. Have them create “digital passports” using colorful paper and stickers, where they write down their favorite online activities and interests. Encourage them to share their passports with the group and discuss what makes the internet so fascinating for them.



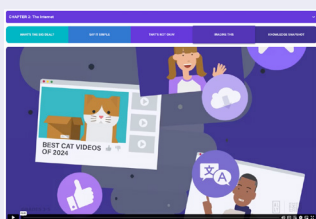
### Say It Simple

After watching the video, discuss with the students the various ways they use the internet and what they find exciting about it. Guide them in understanding that while the internet is a powerful tool, it's essential to use it responsibly. Encourage them to share their experiences and brainstorm positive and healthy ways to navigate the digital space.



### That's Not Okay

Pause the video at different points to discuss the scenarios presented and ask students how they would respond in similar situations. Emphasize the importance of online safety and the role of trusted adults in helping them navigate uncomfortable situations. Encourage open dialogue about setting boundaries and seeking help when needed.



### Imagine This

Pause the video after watching Jamie navigate the online situation and ask students to share their thoughts on what Jaime did well and what could have been done differently. Prompt them to identify safe adults in their lives whom they can turn to for help when faced with similar challenges online. Encourage empathy and critical thinking about online interactions.



### Knowledge Snapshot

Provide students with the activity page along with additional materials such as stickers, glitter pens, and colorful markers to enhance their creativity and give them time to reflect on their online experiences. Encourage them to list activities that make them feel happy and safe online and to discuss the rules they have for internet use with their parents or guardians. After completing the activity, invite them to share their thoughts and drawings with the group, fostering creativity and discussion about online safety.

## FAQ'S AND RESPONSES TO GET YOU THINKING

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### **Q: Is it safe to play online games?**

**R:** Online games can be safe, but it depends on the game and how you use it. It is important that your parents know which games you are playing and that they have explored the platform first to make sure that everything is okay. It is also important to use safety features that prevent people you don't know from communicating with you.

### **Q: Can people see what I do online?**

**R:** While it depends on the exact context, yes, people can potentially see what you do online, especially if your actions include downloading an app, posting something, sharing information, allowing apps to track your location, etc. Websites and platforms also keep a history of what you clicked on and searched for. That is why it's important to think carefully with every action you take online.

### **Q: What should I do if I see something online that disturbs me or that I wasn't supposed to see?**

**R:** While you might feel confused, embarrassed, or upset, it's really important to talk to a trusted adult about it. They can also explain what you saw in a way that makes sense and help you understand that it's not your fault. They can offer guidance on what to do next and help you feel safe. Sometimes, they might help you report the content so that others don't have to see it, too.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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- ▶ Have students create posters with internet safety tips or ways that they keep themselves safe when they are online.
- ▶ Hold a class discussion of scenarios where students need to decide what to do (e.g. a pop-up asks for personal info).
- ▶ Continue learning—build on the material from the previous chapters and introduce [Chapter 3](#) to further discuss information sharing online.

## DISCLOSURES AND REPORTING

As a teacher, you may be one of the first trusted adults a student confides in about these topics. While some may be brief personal stories shared casually, others may require a more serious intervention.

- ▶ Be calm. Reacting with your own shock or disapproval creates further emotional distress.
- ▶ Listen attentively and without interrupting the student.
- ▶ Validate their feelings and acknowledge their courage in speaking up.
- ▶ Avoid making any promises about keeping things confidential or how their parent/ guardian may react. Provide them with comfort that you will continue to be a support and be sensitive to their worries.
- ▶ Ask them if anyone else knows about this already. If a trusted adult in their life already knows, you can simply engage in empathetic listening and ensure that you follow your school/organization's protocols. If a minor is currently at risk of harm or is being harmed, it is your duty to report it to your local child welfare services.
- ▶ Document the disclosure per your school/ organization's best practices.
- ▶ Provide continued support by checking in or providing them with other resources that are available to them.
- ▶ There may be times where a student does not feel comfortable coming forward or is not yet aware that they are experiencing a form of sexual exploitation. The following are signs to look out for as possible indicators:
  - Appearing more tired than usual;
  - Device addiction;
  - Not hanging around their usual group of friends;
  - Isolating themselves;
  - Having profiles on apps that are not age appropriate;
  - Being involved in intimate image sharing; or
  - Having newfound mental health struggles.
- ▶ If you notice any of the above behaviours from a student, make sure to take note and voice your concerns to a school counsellor or administrator.

## CYBERTIP.CA

- ▶ Report about shared intimate images