Empowering Children to Take Action - ***(Be your Digital Super Hero)***

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**Abstract**

Exploring different measures to harden the security infrastructure of the internet at all levels is one of the fundamental aims of Cybersecurity. However, humans are known to be the weakest link of the cyber kill chain due to the fact that most of them lack awareness and the necessary information on how to protect themselves. Children are not left out in this regard. Their high level of inquisitiveness leads them to explore all kinds of information that can be found on the internet which may have devastating impacts to their learning, social life, family and the society at large.

This article ***(Be your Digital Super Hero)*** aims to create an attitudinal change, alongside physical advocacy and other measures to strengthen children on the various means to be safe online, thereby creating a safer and enhanced national Internet usage.

**Introduction:**

Child Online Protection has become a necessity due to the limitless opportunities that the internet offers to children. With just a click, they can access as much content they can, due to the open ended structure of the Internet. Although the benefits are numerous, the rate of exploitation is increasing on daily basis. With smart devices, and high speed connectivity, their safety is not yet guaranteed because of the serious risks and vulnerabilities browsing the internet.

To start with, some of the risks associated or commonly encountered by children are generally geared towards exploiting and victimizing them. Cases such as excessive data mining by commercial media industries, child pornography, images of violence, advanced phishing techniques and wide spread online bullying, are the daily risks faced by children.

**Aims and Objectives:**

The goal of this article, is for children and teenagers to have a positive approach towards using the internet, because as much as the security infrastructure of the internet is hardened, it is not void of ever evolving risks that could be encountered. The end users in this context being the children have their individual roles to play, in order for them to be safe. It is also geared towards contributing to national commitments and capacities towards Child Online Protection in Nigeria.

**BE YOUR DIGITAL SUPERHERO**

**Introduction:**

The internet is one of the best inventions of mankind ever. It is full of information and resources that serve very useful purposes like sending messages, entertainment, gaming, transaction processing and many other uses. Unfortunately, bad people always tend to corrupt or spoil the good things we enjoy in this world, of which the Internet is not an exception.

This implies that being careful and sensitive is very vital if we must continue to enjoy the services of the Internet, because both the good and bad lies in it. Children are one of the highest victims of the Internet because they are lack proper sensitization about their safety online. Another reason is because they are too inquisitive. Always wanting to explore and take risks - which is not bad but if not properly curtailed may be detrimental to them.

**Tips for Your Safety Online:**

Today, I am going to discuss relevant tips with you on how to be safe while using the Internet.

This is because as children, you deserve to be protected, and enjoy a quality internet usage.

Some of these tips include;

1**) Keeping your personal information private:**

Do not share with strangers on social media, personal information about yourself, your family, where you live, where your parents work, your family bank information- ATM pins, and anything your family considers personal. Bad people can easily exploit such details and conversely use them to attack you your family.

**2) The Internet never forgets so Mind What You Share:**

Sharing or posting pictures or Information about yourself to the public or strangers can put you in trouble. Generally speaking, when something goes through the internet, it is hardly possible to delete it. In the future someone might dig such Information up and use it against you, in a way that might affect your career or reputation.

Don't share or post unnecessary things, and especially pictures of you without clothes to anyone. Multiple sharing and liking on social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Instagram can be saved in someone's computer and be used to harm you later in future.

**3) Tell your parents about an online threat.**

If you see or someone ever sends you an offensive or threatening messages online, you have two options.

*a) Show your parents!*

They are your first superheroes! They have the best measures and techniques to protect you from such person or activity. Feel very comfortable talking to your parents or any trusted relative or mature person about any harm you face online, because they are in the best position to help you.

*b) Block and report!*

Most social media platforms have an instant and responsive option, to enable users block and restrict users from continuously sending you messages or content you don't want. If a stranger follows you online and starts sending you plenty messages just block the person.

**4) Avoid bullies and don't retaliate.**

If someone calls you names, or ridicules you in any way, do not respond or be intimidated. Ignore them. Ignore them again and again. But make sure you report such a case to your parents or teacher or an elder one, with screenshots as evidence, to punish such a person legally.

**5) Mind what you click! And don't spend too much time online.**

Imagine seeing a post that “**you have won free coins for your favourite game**”, or “**click to Win 1Millon Naira**”, I will personally be scared, and won’t ever click. This is because there is no free thing or money in the internet. If you click you might get lured to a dangerous site that might end up exploiting you with viruses.

Improve yourself and social life by reading books, exercising, helping your parents and respecting your elderly ones.

Finally, the internet was made for humanity and not the Internet making us who we are not. Therefore, I encourage us all today to stay safe and **be your own hero online**, especially when nobody is watching!

**Riddles for Children**

1. What do computers eat? **Cookies**
2. What made the computer take a vaccine? **Because it had a virus**
3. I am a flying bird app what am I? **twitter**
4. What animal jumps when walking and sit when it is in standing? **A kangaroo**