

Title of Session: Internet Safety and Cyberbullying

Moderator: Nancy Willard

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BJ: great! Let's start with introductions and then Nancy can begin

BJ . o O (we've been anxiously waiting for this discussion for two months!)

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

NancyEW: Well, since there are just a few of us, please tell me who you are and what you would like to talk about

KrantiS: I am Preservice teacher at the University of Houston

PatriciaK1: I am a preservice teacher at the University of Houston

NancyEW: OK, so I am an "assignment" eh? So what material would be most helpful for your class.

BJ pictures Nancy rubbing her hands with glee...newbies to mold to your specifications!

NancyEW: No, just been there, done that, and always wanting to help students

PatriciaK1: I would like to learn more about what safety features schools are implementing to protect students

KrantiS: I would like to know the ways teachers can have internet safety in their classrooms

NancyEW: are or should be?

BJ thinks the most important safety feature is the classroom teacher

PatriciaK1: I agree it must start with the teacher

NancyEW: Actually I have a different opinion -- I think safety starts with leadership

PatriciaK1: To answer your question I am interested in both current practices and what steps could be done to improve the problems

KrantiS: I think I would like to know the same

NancyEW: And the leadership needs to ensure that appropriate policies are in place, that teachers have effective professional development so they know how to lead kids on exciting learning adventures, and there is sufficient technical security and monitoring so that students do not have the inclination to engage in misbehavior.

BJ: excellent, Nancy.

NancyEW: most misuse occurs during what I call "Internet recess" and most times kids engage in Internet recess because their teachers have not been adequately prepared to engage them in better activities

NancyEW: So, OK, you two, you are supposed to respond.

PatriciaK1: So it is a combination of many factors but most importantly engagement of activities and close monitoring of the students

PatriciaK1: I have observed the off task activities while subbing

BJ: Patricia and Kranti, have you received any instruction on having students online?

NancyEW: One of the things I am shifting to is the need for districts to engage in intelligent technical monitoring of students -- tracking what students are doing with a sophisticated key word analysis so if kids are doing the wrong thing, they are identified and the issue is dealt with

BJ . o O (seems to me that this should start in the schools of ed)

NancyEW: It also needs to be addressed in training for subs -- what are the policies, how are they enforced?

PatriciaK1: I believe the students would be less inclined to participate in activities which are inappropriate if they knew they were being watched

KrantiS: So that would mean teachers need to be aware of what students are engaged in

NancyEW: And how are you going to do that and also teach

NancyEW: Step 1 is to have something really engaging to be doing so the kids are so excited in this that they are not inclined to wander (which is difficult if you are a sub).

PatriciaK1: I have observed teachers in a computer lab setting and the students were actively engaged in the activity, the teacher was closely monitoring their activities and not doing other duties

NancyEW: Actively engaged appears to be the key concept.

KrantiS: It has to cater to the students' age and interest

PatriciaK1: As a sub I allow the students time on the computer to complete their task, if they stray, they lose the privilege

NancyEW: So another important concept is an appropriate consequence in the event of misbehavior

KrantiS: What kind of actions do you take?

NancyEW: Should there be a range of possible consequences?

KrantiS: I think it depends on the type of misbehavior so yes

PatriciaK1: Yes, I believe in a warning because I am not their regular teacher and I would have a policy implemented prior to students using the internet

NancyEW: Do you announce any standards in advance?

NancyEW: what kinds of misuse do you typically see?

PatriciaK1: I have not in a subbing situation, however I will in the future. Usually they want to play games or view video clips of upcoming movies

PatriciaK1: Most of the students were high school age

NancyEW: Ah gaming. Sounds like my son. There was a news story today about the problems with advergames -- games that have advertising integrated into the gaming activity itself

PatriciaK1: I have the same issues at home

NancyEW: Have any of you had conversations with kids about issues related to cyberbullying -- kids being cruel to each other online or via cell phone

PatriciaK1: Yes, my niece had an incident with a person last year.

KrantiS: No I haven't.

NancyEW: This is the issue I am focusing on most strongly right now. Much of the activity appears to be occurring off campus -- but we are beginning to hear of suicide incidents associated with cyberbullying. I suspect we would be hearing more, if people were looking.

PatriciaK1: Because of threats?

NancyEW: I have a new web site <http://cyberbully.org> that has some basic information on this. They are harassing, passing rumors, creation sites or blogs that denigrate others, impersonating another for the purpose of making the other look bad, exclusion, disclosure of personal information\

KrantiS: So how do you stop something like this?

PatriciaK1: The incident I am referring to was a lot of name calling and the girls attended the same school so it was an uncomfortable situation and the parents became involved. One of the people impersonated someone else to get the other child to respond.

NancyEW: if you want to impress your professor with your insight into a brand new area, this is it

PatriciaK1: I will review your website following this session, is it a place for young people to go like a hotline?

NancyEW: exchanging passwords is considered to be a mark of friendship -- except when friendships go bad, the person with the password can make life really bad for the other. I have had one report in my local community of a teen attempting suicide after someone did this to her

NancyEW: There is no real hotline and no resource. I have a parent's guide on my site. I think schools need to provide the leadership in their communities to start to address this issue --but schools can't do it alone because much is happening off-campus

PatriciaK1: I agree, more awareness and so many parents are behind their children technologically speaking

NancyEW: Just because it is occurring off campus does not mean that it is not impacting schools -- lowered performance, school avoidance, upset at school, a 11 year old girl in Japan killed her 12 year old classmate because she was angry about that the other girl had posted

PatriciaK1: I am glad I have participated in this discussion because I was not aware of such occurrences and have not read or heard about them in the news

NancyEW: And the cyberbullying is occurring in places without any responsible adults. Additionally, there is a strong social norm that if it happens online, it should stay online - - which means no telling anyone, especially an adult

NancyEW: there is a full list of news stories on my web site.

PatriciaK1: Then we have new social issues to address?

NancyEW: Some really sad stories. One of a portly middle school student who was perceived to be gay. The other kids in the school created a web site to denigrate him -- accepting stories, jokes, cartoons, created by students. The site was up for 2 years.

NancyEW: Your comment about not being aware is one of the biggest problems

PatriciaK1: Students have found a new way to bully without having to make it publicized as it has been done in olden times. Yes we need public awareness before the issues will be addressed

KrantiS: I think people need to be made aware of this issue before it is too late

PatriciaK1: Have these incidents become police matters?

NancyEW: Another thing that teens are doing is trying to make contacts online to "hook-up" engage in commitmentless sex. They are sending sexually explicit pictures of themselves to people they have met online. Sometimes these end up in child porn collections

NancyEW: Many times the actions are either a violation of criminal law -- or could lead to civil litigation. And in most states, there is a parental liability statute that provides that parents can be held liable for intentional torts (wrongdoings) committed by their child

NancyEW: I think if the legal issues in 3 ways 1. the legal standards establish the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not 2. If more parents knew of the possible legal consequences maybe they would pay better attention to talking about values and

monitoring their child 3. If a child is emotionally harmed, there is an ability to push an intervention

DavidWe: May I ask a question?

NancyEW: Many teens have the idea that they have a free speech right to say anything they want online, even if it harms another by disclosing personal information or saying hurtful things

NancyEW: You may always ask a question -- just jump in David

DavidWe: Just wanted to know your feeling about the general level of regular bullying that is going on in schools, today. DO you think it parallels the increase in cyber-bullying?

DavidWe: Thanks, Nancy

PatriciaK1: I know when the issues of stealing music on-line went to the prosecution level people took notice. also, there is software to monitor children's activities but again we go back to the awareness issue

DavidWe: My niece and nephew I think sense more bullying in school (8th and 6th grades, respectively)

DavidWe wants to let Nancy know how much he appreciates her WWWEDU posts

NancyEW: Society seems to be going down interesting tracks. I have studied a lot about online behavior and I would not be surprised to find the level of cyberbullying is greater than in-person bullying. But we do not have good statistics

DavidWe nods

DavidWe: Well, it's easier to get away with, that's for sure

KrantiS: I think it is hard to track it

NancyEW: And we should tell the others that wwwedu is a great place to meet really good folks. just type in wwwedu in a search engine and you will find us

DavidWe agrees 100.1% with Nancy

NancyEW: There are several conditions that I think foster this -- the misperception of anonymity, which makes us think we are invisible and cannot suffer any consequences, the lack of tangible feedback, thus no empathy, the social norm that supports such behavior

DavidWe: I apologize for showing up late. I'm David Weksler. I work with teachers, helping them use the Internet for their teaching and learning. I'm in New Jersey, near New York City

PatriciaK1: There was a parent meeting in our district about internet safety

DavidWe listens to Patricia

NancyEW: do you know what they covered?

NancyEW: Hopefully it was not the I-Safe folks

PatriciaK1: I was not able to attend, however I am going to contact the person who presented the discussion

PatriciaK1: I would like to know more about what our parents learned or did not learn

NancyEW: I have significant concerns about the I-Safe curriculum. For one thing, they advise parents to respect the privacy of their children when they are online. Seems to me that parents need to be paying closer attention -- not looking away.

DavidWe can relate a story

PatriciaK1 nods

NancyEW: The other concern I have is the constant recommendation to use filtering software -- which does not adequately protect younger kids and is a joke for older kids
WaltS joined the room.

NancyEW: I am assuming Dave is typing his story, Hi Sue and Walt

DavidWe: I walked into my nephew's (Alex) room on Monday evening and on Windows Media Player, the track that was current was titled, "What the F*CK" - I asked him about that...he told me someone emailed it to him

DavidWe waves to Walt

DavidWe pauses

WaltS: Hi

DavidWe: I asked him if he thought that it was a good thing to do, to be playing that song, even if someone emailed it to him (don't actually know if that's true or not, but that wasn't the point for me)

PatriciaK1 frowns

DavidWe: He got very quiet and couldn't really come up with an answer...he was, in my opinion, embarrassed

DavidWe: It was important to me that he consider it for himself, with some input from me

NancyEW: There is a really sad story on a web site, I think it is Ryan Hawkins. The parents let this young man have his computer in his room. He was the victim of cyberbullying. This continued as bullying. and the teen killed himself

NancyEW: There are a list of questions that I post to kids to decide what is right and wrong. One of them is How does this action reflect on you.

DavidWe: Alex, my nephew, has a computer in his room

DavidWe wonders about having the computer in a more public place

PatriciaK1: We need to address this cyberbullying directly with our students and incorporate it into our instructional activities

PatriciaK1: just as we have with other forms of bullying

NancyEW: I think it is important to have a computer in a public place until around are 16. Then if all other indicators are favorable -- good grades, appropriate involvement in outside activities, chores, and the like -- a teen should be able to have the computer in his/her room. But if someone is victimizing a child, there will likely be indicators of emotional upset while sitting at the computer and if the computer is in the kid's room, parents are going to miss the clues

DavidWe nods

PatriciaK1 nods

NancyEW: I am working on a book for educators regarding a comprehensive approach to integrate efforts to address cyberbullying into ongoing safe schools activities. There is a brief guide on my web site. Curriculum for kids is something I will get to next.

NancyEW: But right now, the news stories can be used as the basis to begin the conversation

NancyEW: in fact, if anyone is interested in developing any discussion questions that would relate to these, I would welcome the additions

NancyEW: just in case any students need a work project

BJ: Our time is almost up, Nancy. Any final questions or comments?

BJ: The next internet safety/cyberbullying discussion will be October 21

DavidWe: Thanks Nancy

DavidWe: I enjoyed the half that I was around for

NancyEW: Thanks everyone. Please feel free to contact me further on this issue.

PatriciaK1: Thank you Nancy for this very informative discussion, I intend to monitor this problem closely at school and at home

KrantiS: Thank you Nancy for all the information. I have more information about the topic now than when I entered the discussion.

SuePo: Thank you

PatriciaK1: Also, I intend to make as many parents aware of this as I can!

DavidWe: That's good, Patricia

NancyEW: Bye all :waves

DavidWe: Ciao, Nancy

BJ: Thanks, Nancy

PatriciaK1: Nancy Thanks again, bye everyone:wave