ThinkUKKnow e-Newsletter - Issue 16

Privacy
It means different things to different people and the sharing culture which appears to define Web 2.0 has given privacy a new interpretation altogether. Last month, we looked at the risks related to a lack of privacy and how we could encourage young people to protect their personal information online. We'll be continuing this discussion this month but looking at the issue through the lens of privacy management.

There are no secrets in social media
We all need to realise that what we share over social media sites should never be considered protected or hidden. Once something is created in a digital format and then shared, you lose control over who sees it and what they then do with it. A private message between you and a friend can easily be copied as pasted on someone else's wall or forwarded in an email.

Reputation Management is Critical
Young people these days need to be their own PR managers from the moment they start using the internet and posting their own content. They need to understand the responsibility of managing their reputation by ensuring that the information linked to them online reflects them in the most positive light. Young people should regularly search their name in online search engines to see what someone else could find out about them online. They should also work towards balancing any negative information about them online with content which highlights the positive contribution they make to the World Wide Web.

Reputation management is vital from the first moment which young people have an online presence as what they post online today is there forever and could affect their opportunities in the future.

Some things should never be shared
There are some things which should never be shared online, regardless of privacy settings or how much you trust your friends. This content includes any images of someone under the age of 18 in a state of undress or depicted in a sexual manner, content which discriminates or vilifies someone else, messages inciting violence or information which can identify your physical location or personal details. These things should never be shared online or via mobile phones as they may be illegal or pose a serious risk to your safety and wellbeing.

Facebook: Friend or Foe?
All the world's a Facebook profile, and all the men and women merely friends of friends. To paraphrase Shakespeare, given the recent media coverage on Facebook privacy, you wouldn't be alone in believing that everyone's lives are being played out on Facebook. In response to growing criticism over its privacy controls, Facebook has announced an overhaul of its privacy settings which will be rolled out over the next few weeks.

Some of the major changes include:

Simplified controls for who you share content with:
Rather than having to go through each category of content individually, users can now choose to share all content with either Everyone, Friends of Friends or Friends Only. However, users can still break down their privacy settings to each category of content if they wish by selecting the Customise option.

Users should, however, exercise caution before selecting the other option which Facebook provides for setting privacy controls, the Recommended settings. This option spreads out the sharing of content across the three groups of Everyone, Friends of Friends and Friends Only. Under this option, your status updates, posts and relationship status are made available to Everyone and your photos, videos and birthday available to Friends of Friends. This means that all this information is shared with strangers.

Time2Talk
This section provides some useful conversation starters for talking with young people about their use of technology.

Have you ever shared a secret online or over a mobile phone? Do you think it's safe?

Have you typed your name into an online search engine? What could people find out about you online?

Who are friends of friends? Do you really know them and should you really be sharing things with them online?

What applications do you use on Facebook, e.g. Farmville? Do you know what information you share with these applications?


Control what information is shared with applications and websites
This section allows users to control what information is shared with applications and websites, including search engines. Users can view all applications and remove any that are no longer used or turn off the ability to use applications entirely.

Control who can see the images and videos which you are tagged in
This allows users to control who can see the photos and videos which they are tagged in and appear on their profile. However, the person who uploaded these photos and videos can still share this content with others so if you do not want this to happen you still need to remove the tag.

Whilst these changes to the privacy settings will make controlling privacy simpler, it is still important to remember that sites such as Facebook are platforms, not publishers. The responsibility for appropriate content and privacy management still rest with the individual user.

National Cyber Security Awareness Week
June 6 -11, 2010 marks National Cyber Security Awareness Week (NCSAW) with the theme of Protect Yourself Online. A variety of activities will take place during this week to highlight the important of cyber security for all internet users. For more information on NCSAW, please visit www.staysmartonline.gov.au <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/>

SC Magazine Innovation Award
We are also proud to announce that ThinkUKnow has won SC Magazine's innovation award for 2010. This award is presented to the initiative that has changed the traditional practice of IT security. Congratulations to all those who have contributed to the success of ThinkUKnow in winning this award.