

CHILDREN IN THE WEB 2013

HOW TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN
ON THE INTERNET

Monika Gregussová, Miro Drobný



www.zodpovedne.sk



With financial support from the EU's "Safer Internet" Programme.



MINISTERSTVO VNÚTRA
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INTRODUCTION

How many times I have heard, "Our children know far more about information technology than we adults do." Right away, I have wished to add, "Unfortunately, that's true." But shouldn't we rather say "fortunately"? Yes, that's the right word. Our children are FORTUNATELY much more adept at using the Internet and new technologies than their parents, teachers and all the others who, due to our workload, do not have so much time, and, let's face it, quite often not even the will to do something in this area. And the book that you are holding in your hands came into existence in order to bridge these gaps. And that you are holding it now means that you want to change something in the unfavourable score for the adults. This book provides basic information on the threats issuing from computer screens or mobile phone displays. Hence, we have the opportunity to catch up with our children, at least to a certain degree. Because only when we understand what constitutes a threat to us all will we be able to protect our children. I believe that this publication will help not only parents, but also teachers and people working with children and young people at all levels of school. I cross my fingers for the "Children in the Web" and I would like to thank our long-term colleagues from eSlovensko o.z. for their productive and high-quality work. It's my belief that sometime in the future I will be able to say: "Our children remain more skilled on the Internet than we adults, but that's not the point. What is important is that we are open to learning throughout our lives, together with our children, as only this will ensure that one day we do not find ourselves trapped in our own net of laziness and ignorance."

**Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport
of the Slovak Republic, Dušan Čaplovič**

I am presenting you with a publication aimed at protecting children and young people against the threats of the digital age. What a paradox! Instead of promoting everything positive that computers and the Internet have brought to our homes, workplaces or schools, the digital leader points out what is to the contrary. The authors needed more than 100 pages of text to describe the risks associated with modern technology. Cyberbullying, social networking addiction or sexting are terms that you would have sought in vain in dictionaries just a few years ago. Unfortunately, everything new also brings with it bad things in addition to good things and progress. Therefore, we are under an obligation to discuss the threats and consequences which, in some cases, especially in the children's world, can end tragically. That is the reason why I am honoured to be able to introduce to you the first print issue of "Children in the Web". I trust that this publication will help teachers, parents and all who work with young people to better understand the pitfalls of digital networks and thus to protect our children from getting caught in them.

**Digital Champion and State Secretary of the Ministry
of Finance of the SR, Peter Pellegrini**



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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Children and teenagers are one of the groups most at risk in the virtual environment and, simultaneously, they are the ones for whom new technologies represent the greatest temptation and for whom the online world is their second home. Adults, parents, teachers and all the other people working with children would like to know how to proceed with the prevention of these risks.

The first pre-requisite for successful prevention is a due level of awareness. Therefore, the objective of this publication is to provide an overview of the main threats inherent in cyberspace and ways to protect oneself against them.

Each chapter focuses on one area of threats in cyberspace. The beginning of each chapter briefly describes the threat and explains the meaning of terms related to the given topic. Next, we describe in greater detail the threat and its manifestations with special emphasis on the dangers it presents for children and teenagers. We complement the individual threats with actual examples from Slovakia and abroad. The following part provides advice for teachers and parents: what they can do if they want to protect their children against the threats, what should be emphasised and how to broach the topic with children. The chapter ends with tips for children and teenagers. These also include the main messages for prevention. They are formulated so as to be comprehensible and accessible to children. Each chapter also contains some games and sources of the information used in this book.

This publication formed a part of the projects prepared by eSlovensko o. z.: Zodpovedne.sk, OVCE.sk, Pomoc.sk and Stopline.sk which focus on the dissemination of information about the safe and responsible use of the Internet and mobile phones, about the threats present in cyberspace and possibilities for getting advice and assistance.

The project is co-funded by the European Union within the Safer Internet Programme. eSlovensko, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Committee for UNICEF – the Child Helpline, Slovak Telekom, Slovanet, Telefónica Slovakia, SK-NIC and others are partners of the project.

INTOLERANCE ON THE WEB

Discrimination, racism, xenophobia, extremism

The Internet is an unrestricted virtual world. On the one hand, everyone can fulfil themselves on the Internet, create something new, everyone can find his/her own place. However, on the other hand, people with intolerant opinions can also present themselves here. As anyone can post whatever they want on the Internet, this imposes greater demands on critical thinking – the ability to distinguish which information is true and which is false or distorted.



TERMS

Discrimination: is unjust and unwanted treatment of an individual or a certain group different from the treatment of another individual based on his/her differences, e.g. racial or ethnic origin, health or mental condition, age, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Racism: is a discriminatory theory which divides people on the basis of their race. According to proponents of racism, human beings can be divided into several categories which can be put into a hierarchical structure, i.e. it assesses which people are better and which are worse. Then, based on this division, one group gains more rights and advantages than the other.

Xenophobia: is used to designate unsubstantiated fear and hatred towards whatever is unknown and different, especially towards foreigners.

Extremism: is defined as an ideology or behaviour which differs significantly from the generally accepted standards. Extremism is often connected with racial, national or religious intolerance. Pronounced extremism is accompanied by verbal or physical aggression.

Hate speech: is hateful, defamatory behaviour, a discriminating form of aggression towards an individual or a group based on affiliation to some minority. The term cyberhate is also used in connection with the Internet.

Where you can encounter intolerance on the Internet:

Chat: Various chat-rooms are the most frequent places where you can encounter comments and attacks motivated thus. Children and young people perceive mutual attacks in chats as a form of entertainment or way of easing tension. In our country, it's mainly the Roma, Hungarians and people with a different sexual orientation who are seen to be suitable targets. These comments are not intended to disseminate racist and extremist ideas so much as to provoke the other side to "fight" verbally. Similar behaviour is also called **flaming** (posting insulting messages, literally "spewing flames") or **trolling** (posting provocative, inflammatory comments not related to the topic under discussion in order to draw attention) in the Internet slang.

Internet forums, discussion boards, discussions on articles: discriminatory or xenophobic opinions and comments can be found on the Internet and in various discussions and forums. The discussions usually reflect the attitudes, prejudices and current climate in society, the tension in people. Thus, they become the space in which people express their frustration, anger and dissatisfaction. The users are not really interested in a real discussion – an exchange of views and an attempt to understand each other – but the need to alleviate tension. The Roma and Hungarian issues, attitudes towards people with a different sexual orientation, the Jewish question are among the topics which are controversial in Slovakia and mostly reflect intolerance towards otherness. Similar discussions are to be found on certain websites (e.g. online dailies, news coverage) which are monitored by an administrator. The administrator will remove a posted message if its author violates the discussion rules, i.e. if the author supports violence, hateful attitudes and intolerance towards minorities. The English term hate speech is used for hateful speeches or displays in the virtual world in which the author attacks someone based on the differences of this person or group (e.g. national, ethnic, sexual, etc.).

Hoax: The dissemination of false or inaccurate information by means of so-called hoaxes is used to incite hatred. Messages featuring the amount of social benefits provided for the Roma and others are an example of a hoax.

Blogs, personal websites, social networks: Personal websites and blogs are other places for the presentation of intolerant attitudes and extremist views. The texts range from dissatisfaction to direct violent and hateful statements. Social networks where so-called hate groups or video websites emerge are a similar space. People present their own ideas, even under their own names, in the added comments, which go so far as the promotion of murder or genocide.



EXAMPLE:

*The group **I will sacrifice 2 euro to buy an island for gypsies!!** on Facebook has 30,839 members.*

*10,815 people like the group **We don't want the Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK) in Slovak politics!** on Facebook.*

*4,566 people like the group **I am definitely against the depraved gay pride in Bratislava** on Facebook.*

*The group **No advantages for gypsies** on Facebook was removed following a request by the civic association People Against Racism.*

The conditions for posting similar texts, videos and comments or their subsequent removal are rather a matter for public discussion about how far freedom of speech extends and where it starts to breach the law (e.g. on the defamation of a race or on incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred). The administrator of the website can regulate or moderate the texts to a certain degree, whichever is appropriate, especially on portals for children and adolescents. However, the positive solution

in this area is not to increase control or censorship of the Internet from a position of power but rather to gradually enhance tolerance towards otherness in society and also the activities of visitors to websites who can express their disagreement with similar comments and attacks.

Websites of extremist movements: The Internet makes a suitable background for various extremist groups (racist, xenophobic, Nazi). They can promote their thoughts, ideas and messages via the Internet, communicate with each other, acquire new members and broaden their networks. At the same time the Internet provides them with the possibility to organise their activities very efficiently worldwide – marches, demonstrations, meetings. Many websites appear that promote the movements; their members place documents, pictures, videos from their events on the web, they organise exchanges of artefacts and literature. Extremist messages are sometimes disseminated indirectly – through music or games. Typical symbols for the promotion of Nazism are numbers 18 (the position of the first letters in Adolf Hitler's name in the alphabet), 88 (Heil Hitler) or 14 (based on the number of words in a quotation from David Lane).

In Slovakia, the dissemination of such ideas on the web constitutes a criminal offence. In the eyes of the law, the following crimes are involved: Support and promotion of groups directed towards suppressing fundamental rights and freedoms; Defamation of nation, race and religion or Incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred. However, most of the Slovak websites with such content are located on American servers. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution on freedom of expression applies on the US territory, i.e. hate speech on the web, promotion of the Third Reich and fascism, casting doubt on the Holocaust, etc. also fall under freedom of expression. The criminal prosecution of the authors of website content is, therefore, quite limited.

Extremist movements use special strategies for dissemination of ideas and acquisition of supporters:

Identifying a suitable target: When looking for new supporters, extremist groups often focus on adolescents who are combating their own inferiority complex and lack of a sense of meaning in life. They take advantage of their vulnerability, accumulated anger and frustration. An insecure and lonely teenager can become an easy target – he/she acquires a feeling of strength and identity in an extremist group. Suddenly, he/she is important for someone, somebody needs him/her, he/ she can fight for a common objective. He/she feels special – we, our group, are better than the others.

Creating the impression of credibility of information: The information that extremist movements use to substantiate their ideas is usually camouflaged as "historical" or "scientific". Extremists use technical language or the findings of experts, researchers and other authorities, often moral authorities beyond dispute. They take the information out of context or they distort it and adapt it to their own ends. They make use of arguments which seem at first sight to be clear, but which in reality are based on logically untenable judgements; the causes and consequences are confused. They present their opinions and convictions as the absolute truth.

Invoking fear and manipulation: Extremists seek to instill fear in people. They present a certain group of people as representing a threat to society which has to be stopped at any cost. They describe disastrous scenarios as to what will happen if no one does anything about it. They use arguments such as “if they can do it, we can do it too” to justify the use of violence.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST INTOLERANCE ON THE WEB

Filter the content: Filters can be used for younger children. They will sort out the websites where children could encounter intolerance. However, no filter is absolutely reliable and effective. If the filter selects on the basis of a list of websites, the list will never contain all the websites possible. If it selects on the basis of keywords, it will also weed out those sites which present reliable and trustworthy information on the given topic.

Choose games: Some computer games may contain discriminatory elements. Producers are obliged to label the game with the relevant symbol. If you buy computer games, study the labelling in the PEGI system (Pan European Game Information) with your child in advance, talk about why such games can be dangerous and then choose a game together which does not contain any such elements.

Reliable sources of information: Look for information on reliable websites. Such websites can belong to a tried and tested institution, state or educational institution, non-profit organisation which deals with the given topic, etc. Also, look into who operates or co-finances the website. Trustworthy sites may be supported by state institutions or the European Union. You can also look at what others write about the operators of the website.

“Hate speech – more speech” strategy: Hate speech can simply be suppressed and forced out by “shouting down”. Express your disapproving attitude, in a non-aggressive but unambiguous way, towards all hate speech that you discover in blogs and discussions.

Pay attention to the activities of your child on the Internet: Talk about what your child has seen on the web, what websites he/she visits. Encourage your child, let him/her ask you to help if they encounter something they don’t understand. Also encourage them to tell you when something unpleasant happens to them or someone hurts them.

Develop critical thinking: The most effective way of protecting children against discrimination and racism on the web (and in real life) is to develop their critical thinking. That is the most significant role of parents. To teach children to perceive diversity around them, to accept it and not to create prejudices. The family is the first source of information that children have. Children learn from their parents, they adopt their attitudes and values. They are very perceptive and detect even unspoken views and attitudes reflected in the behaviour of their parents.

Your child will be able to think critically and perceive the people and events around him/her to the same extent as you. If you want to pass this on to them, start with yourselves. Take an interest in history and political events, compare various opinions and attitudes, seek out the truth. Learn to distinguish displays of hatred: swastikas, symbols, drawings, humiliation of people, violent videos, attempts to manipulate and control. Be active in expressing your attitudes and opinions, become involved in public events, take note of discrimination occurring around you.

Support your child in his/her self-reliance, making decisions on his/her behalf, without surveillance by an authority that would tell him/her what to and what not to believe. You have to lead your child to this by stages. The child will learn only if you give him/her enough space – you allow the child to think independently, discuss with him/her and do not force your opinion on them as being the sole correct one. However, you can accompany them in the search for the truth and show them how to find various sources of information and how to compare them.



ATTITUDE TOWARDS RACISM AND HATRED ON THE INTERNET – DISCUSSION SCENARIO

Príklad podľa Hate on the Internet: A Response Guide for Educators and Families,
http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/publications/hoj_full.pdf

Description of the situation for the child:

A friend you have just met in a chat-room suggests the two of you have a private chat. As you start chatting in the private chat-room, your friend tells you how he hates Jews. He asks you if you have ever heard of the Holocaust. When you say you have, he tells you that it is all just a bunch of lies the Jews have invented and that in reality nothing like that ever happened. He gives you a website address confirming what he is saying.

Questions for the child:

- Would you continue to chat with this friend? Why or why not?
- What could happen if you continued to chat?
- Would you visit the website your friend recommended to you?
- What do you know about this friend? And what don't you know?
- Should you tell someone about this conversation? If so, who? Why is it important?

What the parent can do:

Talk to the child about the potential dangers of visiting sites created by people that promote hate, racism or spread misinformation.

Explore with your child websites and look for historical sources with factual information about the Holocaust (for instance: <http://www.holokaust.sk/>).



EXAMPLE:

Enter the keywords “David Lane” in the browser and compare the information on Metapedia.org: “David Lane was an American philosopher and activist” with information on Wikipedia.org: “David Lane was an American white nationalist leader and convicted felon.”

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **If someone bullies you or attacks you on the web, he/she has no right to do that.** Inform an adult about it, report unpleasant behaviour to the administrator of the site or exit such a site immediately. If you encounter attacks or threats on the web or your mobile phone, save the evidence (SMS, e-mails). Create and save a screenshot, printscreen or communication on the website.
- Anyone can contribute anything to the Internet. If you encounter an opinion, how do you know if it is based on truth? It can just be the personal opinion of one person. **Before you start to trust the information, check it.** Ask someone else or browse several websites to see what other opinions you can find on this topic.
- **Think about whether your attitudes are really correct.** How do you create your opinions? Do you have enough information? Hatred towards someone is frequently a reflection of your own fear of the unknown. You should be interested not only in whether or not some pieces of information are true, but also in why some prejudices exist and what can be done about them.
- It doesn't follow that what you regard as fun is necessarily funny or pleasant for others. If you mock, abuse or threaten someone on the web, you hurt him/her. Some deeds cannot be deleted or taken back. **You alone are responsible for how you treat other people** and for the consequences of this behaviour.
- **Be active – join the fight against intolerance.** You can report inappropriate comments in some chat-rooms and discussions – i.e. also comments in which the users attack others. Show that you don't like this. You can report sites that openly promote racism and extremism in Slovakia on Stoplevel.sk.

Browse information on the web together with your child and show him/her how to proceed – how to distinguish between true and false information, how to discover that someone is trying to manipulate you.

Support the child's responsibility: Lead the child towards being responsible for his/her way of treating others on the web. Think together about how the other person might feel, since the child does not see the other's reaction directly. Talk also about what the child can do him/herself if he/she encounters intolerance, discrimination or racism on the web (whether directed towards him/herself or to others). Look for



various solutions – from passive ones (exiting the website) to the more active ones (reporting the site to the administrator, expressing disagreement in the discussion, reporting illegal content on Stopline.sk, blocking racially-oriented groups on Facebook up to writing a protest petition).

Develop a healthy self-confidence in the child: Treat your child as a unique and special person, respect his/her emotions and views. Show him/her that he/she is highly precious to you just the way he/she is. In this way the child will also perceive him/herself as being valuable and will not be so dependent on appreciation or acceptance by others. Thus the child will be better able to resist group pressure and to stand up for his/her own opinion

GAMES

Name of the game: **Everyone is a minority** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: The children describe situations in which they found themselves in a minority. For instance: “I am a left-hander, I am tall, I only have sisters, I can’t play football, I don’t watch TV, I’ve got brown eyes, I’ve got red hair...”. Talk together about what annoyances this brings and, vice versa, what advantages accrue when I am different than the majority around me. The objective of this game is to make the children consider that each one of us is somehow different and thus can become the target of bullying or hate.

Name of the game: **Eye colour** (grades 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Divide the children into groups based on their eye colour. Choose the first group, e.g. blue-eyed children. Give a task to the other groups – let them invent reasons why they don’t want to be friends with the blue-eyed children. When all the

groups have presented their “arguments”, let the blue-eyed children express their feelings about this “eye” racism and let them dwell on what touched them most and why. Then change the groups.

Name of the game: **Guess where I come from** (secondary school)

Procedure: Divide the children in three groups. Tell two groups which nationality/ /country they come from. For instance, Estonians and Argentinians. Tell the first group – Estonians, to find reasons why they don’t like the nationality/ country of origin of the second group, i.e. Argentinians. By contrast, Argentinians should find reasons why they want to move to Estonia. Children can search for information about both countries on the web. During the “arguments” the nationality/ name of the country must not be spoken. The third group – the audience, have to guess where both groups come from. Start with the nationality children do not know much about and end with combinations such as Slovak – Hungarian, Roma – Arab, etc. Review the feelings of the children after each game: how it is when someone does not want to accept them.



SHEEPLIVE.EU

The fairy-tale **White Sheep** deals with discrimination and racism on the web.

The **Other Side** deals with social equality.

Responsibly deals with responsible use of the Internet.

SOURCES:

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/online_hate/index.cfm

http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/publications/hoi_full.pdf

<http://www.diskriminacia.sk>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

<http://hateme2.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/nenc3a1visc5a5-na-internete-broc5bec3barapre-uc48ditec4beov-strednc3bdch-c5a1kc3b4l.pdf>

<http://hatemetoo.sk>

<http://beznavisti.sk>

GAMES AND GAMBLING

Computer games, video games, online games, video game consoles, online gambling

A game is a natural part of human life, especially a child's life; it is a means of acquiring new skills and gaining new experience. It is a relaxing, fun and sociable activity. Games on computers, mobile phones and video game consoles have recently been gaining more and more popularity.

In addition to developing computer skills, computer games also have many other positive effects. In some of them, the player has to solve brain-teasers and various tasks which develop the memory and thinking. The solving of tasks and making decisions in games increases the child's independence, whilst in group games the child can learn to cooperate with others. Dynamic and action games develop the coordination of eye and hand movements, fine motor skills and concentration. The child learns orientation within space during movement in online worlds. Last but not least, games can be used as learning instruments – the child can try out the functioning of economic principles or planning in simulations and strategies. When playing foreign games or communicating with players from all over the world, the child develops his/her vocabulary or language knowledge.

In addition to these positive effects, computer games also pose risks – for instance one-sided activities of the child or the risk of addiction.



TERMS

Gaming: this term means playing electronic games on various appliances. If an Internet connection is used while playing, this is known as online gaming. The English word gamer is used to designate the player.

Online gambling: gambling via digital technologies (computer with Internet, television or mobile phone).

Level: the level achieved in a computer game. After achieving certain goals, the player moves up to the next level, whereby he/she often accrues further advantages.

Facts about gaming

Research on Slovak children in the virtual world, carried out in 2008 by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in collaboration with the civic association eSlovensko, revealed that gaming is the most frequent activity of children on the web.

Up to 85.1% of 1st to 5th graders at primary schools and 70.0% of 6th to 9th graders at primary schools play games. Younger children cited fear of monsters, blood, killing people and nightmares as negative effects of gaming. Older children stated that



Types of computer games

Adventures: games based on a gripping story. The gamer steadily searches for various objects which have to be used correctly in order to solve the mystery.

Action games: the gamer experiences an adventure, fights against enemies, chases after criminals. Action games require skilful movements and rapid reactions.

Card and party games: the computer version of traditional party games such as solitaire, chess, puzzles.

Role-playing games (RPG): the gamer puts him/herself in the shoes of a character in the virtual world. The gamer creates his/her character, gradually enhances it and experiences thrilling adventures. So-called MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game) is a separate category of role-playing games. Thanks to the web, these games enable thousands of gamers from all over the world to play and interact at the same time. World of Warcraft is the best-known MMORPG.

Simulations and strategies: they enable the gamer to try out real situations in a game; they require tactical and strategic thinking and planning.

Jumping games: simple games requiring skills and quick reactions when jumping over obstacles.

Social games: short and simple game applications on social networks which require the involvement of the gamer's friends.

Shooter games: the opponents in the game are eliminated by various firearms.

Sports games: computer versions of various sports, such as hockey, football or car races.

as they spent long hours gaming on the computer they sometimes suffered from headaches, they did not do their homework, they forgot to eat and drink, they thought about gaming constantly and were unable to tear themselves away from the game.

Some computer games are not played on conventional computers but on other platforms:

Games console: equipment which is usually connected to the TV screen. State-of-the-art games consoles allow scanning of the gamer's movement who then controls the game with his/her own body.

Portable hand-held console: it renders it possible to play games at any time and in any location.

Mobile phone: it can be used for simpler game applications; more expensive mobile phones can also be used for more complicated games developed specially for mobile phones.

Interconnected computers: gamers can interconnect and play games together or against each other via Internet connections. If playing MMORPG, the Internet allows thousands of players from all over the world to play at the same time.

COMPUTER GAMES THREADS

Health threats

Computer games in themselves do not pose any health threats. However, if the child spends the entire leisure time playing games, they can leave traces, just as any one-sided activity does.

The consequences of lack of movement resulting from the excessive playing of computer games is the most common threat. Sitting at the computer in an inappropriate position can damage the spine and lead to debility of the muscles. Lack of movement and poor food habits on the part of the players can contribute to obesity. The effect of long hours of staring at the screen is to dry up the eye mucous membrane, causing irritation which subsequently leads to headaches. Playing games into the early morning hours disturbs the natural sleep rhythm. Repetitive loading of the hand in moving the mouse can lead to a painful inflammation of the wrist (carpal tunnel syndrome).

Using ergonomic furniture, alternating activities, relaxing muscles are the best preventions of the health risks of gaming. The gamers should not forget to drink and eat regularly. Adrenaline is released whilst playing, affecting the child's behaviour, hence it is appropriate to avoid gaming shortly before going to bed.

Inappropriate behaviour and violence in games

Some games played by children and adults contain negative elements such as killing people or animals, alcohol and drug abuse, criminal behaviour and flouting of the law, sexual violence and violence against women, racial prejudices, abusive language. Parents are concerned that such games will affect the behaviour of their children. They fear that, if their children play violent games, they will become violent also in real life and their sensitivity to violence and empathy with victims will diminish. They argue that, unlike television, games are not just passive. If the child is to win, he/she must adopt an aggressive manner towards others. The child not only gets to watch aggressive behaviour, but also behaves in the same way, albeit only in the virtual world. Violent behaviour in a game is recompensed and moving up to the next level is the reward for killing enemies. To date, scientists have been unable to confirm any direct connection between behaviour in games and in real life – not all children who play aggressively subsequently behave aggressively. There is rather a link between violence and the personality traits of the particular child, the quality of relations and events in the child's life.

Children often use games to channel what they have experienced in real life; in this way they cope with tension and frustration, with changes in their lives. Negative emotions are a part of our lives, just as are positive ones, and even anger and aggressiveness have their meaning; they are necessary if we are to function successfully. Children need to learn not just to be good, but also to defend themselves against danger. Aggressiveness and aggressive games have always formed a part of children's development. Through games, children have learned how to behave

in various situations. However, in the past children played soldiers and fought more in reality. Playing an aggressive game can also be a reaction to frustration and unpleasant experiences. Children vent their anger and helplessness in the virtual world. In such cases, games can be useful.

Video game addiction

Playing games doesn't always have to be negative. A group game can be the launch pad for children who find problems in building relationships in reality; it can boost their self-confidence and self-assurance. However, there needs to be a reasonable balance between relationships with the virtual community of gamers and relationships in real life. A computer game ceases to be ordinary fun if it becomes the child's sole pastime. If the game is an activity for which the child neglects all the other activities in his/her life, such as the relations with his/her closest relatives and friends, and is the only way in which the child experiences feelings of pleasure, the child can easily become addicted.

It has been confirmed that video-gaming addiction is a social problem. The cause of the addiction is not the game itself but it's rather a sense of a lack of fulfilment, loneliness, sadness and suffering. Children escape from these feelings into the world of games and fantasy where they experience joy, success and often also acceptance within the group of fellow-gamers. The development of the child's relationships in real life, the interest of parents in what is going on in the child's life and what concerns him/her are the best ways of protecting him/her from computer game addiction.

You will find more about gaming addiction in the chapter on **Addictions**.

Meeting a sexual predator

The world of games can be the ideal spot for meeting a sexual predator. The predator is able to identify which games children play at a certain age and can address them directly. The predator can gradually win over the child by creating a relationship, sharing common hobbies and chatting on the web, which usually constitutes part of the game. Predators usually bribe the children by offering their help in getting to the next level in the game and further attractive advantages, for instance paying for an expansion of the game or special supplements. Children who reveal a lot of their personal data are subject to greater risk.

EXAMPLE (account of a boy):

"I used this opportunity once. I created a girl's profile in a game and when a guy wrote to me and asked me to send my video, I downloaded a video from the web. And as a reward he purchased gold for me in TRAVIAN."



You will find more about **grooming** (building a relationship with a child in order to commit a sexual assault on him/her) in the chapter on Internet **Acquaintances**.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is also possible in the online gaming environment. There are many sophisticated ways of harassing another gamer. The child can be excluded from the group or his character can always be killed off when he/she logs in to a game, so that he/she cannot accomplish any tasks and get to the next level. Others can verbally abuse and threaten him/her in the game, they can falsely accuse him/her of hurting other characters. They can also steal his/her game account, hence denying the child access to the character that he/she developed over a long time, or they can steal the property of this character. Subsequently, they may blackmail the child, claiming that they will restore the character in return for a financial equivalent etc.

You will find more about cyberbullying in the chapter on **Cyberbullying**.

Online gambling

The Internet has also afforded easier access to gambling – the player can play directly from home, no one sees him/her while playing, he/she can join gambling sites from the whole world. In recent years the number of operators of websites where players can join in gambling in real time, around the clock, has grown dramatically. Poker, casinos, sports bets, bingo or lotteries are among the favourite gambling sites.

Unlike gaming where the experience, adventure and fun are the main attractions, the prospect of profit is the main attraction of online gambling. However, this requires that the player invest his/her own money. He/she may well win something, but later he/she loses more and more money. This forces him/her to bet more and more to make up for the previous loss. The player is convinced that at some point he/she has to win. Gambling gradually becomes an addiction, and the player is capable of losing his/her entire property as a result of gambling. Under the law, gambling is forbidden to persons younger than 18 years of age. However, the companies that operate such websites try to win new players very aggressively. When browsing the web, the child will surely encounter pop-ups offering fantastic wins. He/she may click on the pop-up solely out of curiosity, or even to test out such a site. These sites require the user to enter personal data, including their age, but a skilled Internet-user has no problem in circumventing such an age limit.

The risk of online gambling for children and adolescents is reduced by their more difficult access to money. However, a proportion of teenagers already use Internet banking. Some children may misuse their parents' credit card.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST THE THREATS POSED BY GAMES AND GAMBLING

Select appropriate games

Producers are obliged to mark every game with an appropriate age limit and symbols indicating whatever inappropriate content appears in the game. If you are buying

computer games, study the labels in the PEGI (Pan European Game Information) system with your child in advance. You can find the evaluation of individual games directly on www.pegi.info and www.pegonline.eu. Thus, together with your child, you can assess whether or not the game is suitable for him/her.



PEGI labels:



A game with this label is suitable for all age categories, even for children only 3 years old. It does not contain any potentially inappropriate content. (But that does not mean that the game will be comprehensible to a three-year-old.)



The game is suitable for children aged seven and above. It may contain potentially scary scenes or sounds, and scenes depicting partial nudity, but never in a sexual context.



The game is suitable for children aged twelve and above. The game may contain milder depictions of violence, but it must not be graphic in relation to human characters or animals. All verbal abuse must be mild and it must not contain any sexual innuendoes.



The game is suitable for children aged sixteen and above. Depictions of violence or sexual activities are realistic. The game may contain more extreme swearing, the use of tobacco and drugs, and depictions of criminal activities.



The game is suitable only for adults aged eighteen and above. It contains harsh and extreme violence (killing without any reason, violence towards defenceless people).



Game contains bad language.



Game contains depictions of, or material which may encourage, discrimination.



Game refers to, depicts or promotes the use of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco).



Game may be frightening or scary for young children.



Game that encourages or teaches gambling.



Game depicts nudity and/or sexual behaviour or contains sexual references.



Game contains depictions of violence.



Game can be played online.



Many websites and online services contain small games. If the online game on the website is marked as "PEGI OK", it means that gamers of all age categories can play this game, because it does not contain any potentially inappropriate content.

Take interest in the child's activities

Position the computer so that you can see what your child is doing. Have an overview of the games installed in the computer. Take an interest in the games your child is playing and why; play these games together. Even playing a computer game together can strengthen the bond between you. The child needs to feel that you are interested in the things that are important to him/her and that you like to spend time with your child doing joint activities.

Set clear rules

Talk to your child about games and their potential threats. Explain to your child why you don't want him/her to play violent games or games that are unsuitable for him/her. Set game-playing rules (e.g. the child can play only after doing their homework) and agree on the amount of time your child can spend playing games. But be realistic. Prohibitions and restrictions themselves will never fully work. The child will get access to games at his/her friend's or at school, he/she will not always stick to the rules agreed or will seek to negotiate with you. However, it is good if he/she knows what is expected of him/her and if you can rely on your agreement.

Parental control

It can be difficult for the child to stick to time limits, especially when the child gets fully immersed in the game. You can agree to set a system of parental control (e.g. in the Windows operation system or by means of blocking software) where you can precisely define access to the individual games or a time schedule. The computer or Internet browser will be automatically turned off at the specified time. You can also prevent access to online games using these instruments. Bear in mind that games can also be played on a game console or mobile phone, not only on the computer.

Other possibilities for spending free time

If your child spends too much time playing computer games, offer him/her other options. At the beginning, the child will probably not be very enthusiastic when you tear him/her away from his/her favourite game, but ultimately he/she will welcome your effort and sincere interest. Do not give up and try to find something to fill out the free time you share – maybe activities in the countryside, various sports or party games to which you can invite the whole family or your child's friends. Bear in mind that you will need to alternate the activities to secure a healthy and versatile development for your child.

Protection against aggressors

Warn your child that, even in the games environment, he/she can meet someone who wants to hurt him/her. The child should choose a safe password for logging into the game (at least eight characters, a random combination of letters, numbers and symbols). It is important that the child does not disclose any personal data.

Encourage your child to tell you if someone hurts him/her in the game. Do not try to protect your child by banning games – it could happen that the next time your child will not tell you about his/her unpleasant experience. Report aggressive behaviour to the administrator of the gaming server.

Risks of gambling

Explain to your child how gambling works. Companies that operate online gambling mainly follow their own interest. The probability that it will be your child that gets rich gambling online is low, but the risks are high. Watch for unexpected expenditure items on your account and make sure that your child is not using your credit card without your knowledge and consent.

Blocking software

You can install blocking software in the computer that will restrict access to sites that are inaccessible to children under the age of eighteen – i.e. gambling sites also. However, discuss this step with your child and explain why you want to protect him/ /her this way.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **Specify in advance how much time you are going to spend gaming and when you will stop.** If it is difficult for you to stick to a time limit, tell yourself you will stop after you progress to another level or after the alarm clock goes off. It is a good way to exercise your strength of will. Games have such power that sometimes you forget to eat, drink or sleep.
- **Protect yourself against this effect and think about your health.** Take regular breaks, change your position, move your body, look away from the screen. The best recourse is to alternate activities – after playing for a long time on the computer your body will be grateful if you go out and do something.
- **Think about your safety when gaming.** Do not disclose personal information, protect your password, be wary of strangers. If another gamer hurts you intentionally in the game, report this to the administrator of the gaming server or tell an adult.
- **Other gamers are real people,** not robots. If you taunt them, verbally abuse them or hurt them in the game, you really hurt them. Therefore, treat them as you would like others to treat you.
- **Everything has its cost.** Some improvements can be purchased for game money, but frequently you have to pay for specialties with real money (e.g. by sending an expensive SMS). Think about what you can afford or talk about it with your parents.
- **How to get free from addiction.** Try to replace your online activities by offline activities. (Do you play football on the computer? Go out and play with your friends. Do you chat up girls on the social network? Replace it with personal conversation.)



Help with problems

Pay heed to even minor changes in the child's behaviour. The child can experience something while gaming that hurts him/her; for instance he/she can happen upon someone who bullies him/her. Be especially aware if you have the impression that your child spends too much time on gaming, escapes from problems in the gaming world or behaves more aggressively to others than usual. If you are concerned, you can seek advice from the consultants on the free helpline Pomoc.sk (116 111) who will answer your questions or enlist professional psychological help for you.

GAMES

Name of the game: **PEGI system** (grades 1 - 5 of primary school)

Procedure: Games producers are required to mark games with an age limit and symbols indicating whichever inappropriate content appears in the game. Show the children the individual symbols of the PEGI system and let them guess their meaning. Let the children say why a game with the given symbol is not appropriate for them.

Name of the game: **50 years ago, today and in 50 years**
(grades 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Choose three smaller groups of children. They will have to play how children spend free time. The first group will play current children and will depict how children play when they come home. The second group will do the same but from fifty years ago, without any Internet, computers and game consoles. The third group will

try to play what children will be doing in their free time in fifty years. The audience has to guess which scene takes place in which time. Elaborate with the children on the differences in the ways the individual groups spend free time and find positive and negative aspects of the three time periods.

SHEEPLIVE.EU



The fairy-tale **Muddy Heads** deals with PC games addiction.

Carnival Mask deals with the imitation of idols in dangerous scenes.

SOURCES:

<http://www.video-game-addiction.org>

<http://www.surfnetkids.com>

<http://www.microsoft.com>

<http://gametheoryonline.com>

<http://www.saferinternet.at>

<http://www.kotaku.com>

INTERNET FRAUD

The risks of online shopping, Internet fraud, hacking, illegal downloading from the Internet, violation of copyrights

The Internet has many advantages that you can use for your own benefit, such as unlimited distribution of information, speed, access to services at any time and any place. But these advantages are also available to fraudsters, who rely mainly on anonymity and the limited surveillance in the virtual environment, but also on ignorance and carelessness on the part of other Internet users. The web also tempts ordinary users to circumvent certain laws when they, for instance, download music or films from the web, even though they have not paid for them.



TERMS

ClickJacking: a term created by joining the English words “click” and “hijacking”; this technique tricks the user to click on a site, hijacks the click and subsequently misuses it for another, fraudulent purpose.

Download: transfer of data from the web to the user. Upload is the opposite of download; that is when data are transferred from the user’s computer to the web.

Hacking: illegal breaking into someone else’s computer or computer systems.

Peer-to-peer network (P2P): type of software that makes it possible to exchange files between web-users, whereby each web-user makes a portion of his/her data available to other network participants.

Phishing: (from password fishing) activity where the fraudster tries to lure users into divulging various passwords, e.g. the bank account password.

Discount portals: websites which mediate the sales of goods and services at advantageous prices.

Risk of online shopping

The Internet allows people to buy simply from the comfort of their homes, at any time without running around the shops. You can even order goods from abroad easily. You can see and choose the goods directly on the web and have them delivered to your doorstep. You often pay less for goods on the Internet than in a normal shop. You can purchase other services, such as a vacation or accommodation, quickly and simply via the Internet.

But online shopping also has its disadvantages. You cannot look at or try out the goods in advance, and sometimes you have to wait weeks for delivery of the goods.

Advantageous offers can be so tempting that you cannot resist and order more than you actually need and are able to pay. Children, especially, are exposed to a higher risk as they submit to marketing strategies even more readily than adults and are not likely to take the financial means of the family into consideration. As goods or services can be ordered cash on delivery when shopping online, the parents may be in for a substantial shock.

However, you could also be a victim of fraud. When shopping online, you enter your personal data that can be misused (you will find more in the chapter on Misuse of Personal Data). Unscrupulous sellers will send you goods or provide services that do not at all correspond to what you have chosen on the website and they refuse to accept your complaints. In the worst case, you pay for the goods or services but you never receive them

EXAMPLE:



Slovakia, 2011. Two young people decided to work and study for a certain time in England. They were looking for an apartment to rent in advance. They found a suitable apartment on the web and exchanged several e-mails with the owner. However, she asked for an advance payment by postal order to her bank account. Then she took the money and disappeared.

Advantageous offers and easy profits

Imprudent and gullible web-users can be tricked into buying advantageous offers or offers promising quick profits with minimum costs.

Suppliers promise free or very cheap goods and services in advantageous offers. However, that is not the final price – the real costs are stated at the end of the contract in small print as additional costs. People are happy about the advantageous purchase and they do not read the contract thoroughly and confirm it despite the highly disadvantageous conditions.

Various Ponzi schemes or clear frauds are hidden behind offers of easy profit. In Ponzi schemes, the user sends a certain amount of money in the hope that he/she will gradually get to a higher level and others will send money to him/her. In reality, schemes like this are unsustainable – the number of people who would have to join the scheme to make it profitable increases exponentially. After several levels, this number would be greater than the total population of Earth.

As for frauds, strangers offer highly advantageous business transactions by e-mail, e.g. they ask for help in transferring a huge amount of money to a bank account in Slovakia. The user should then receive a reward, a percentage of this amount. If the user swallows the bait, he/she will discover that first a fee has to be paid here,

another one there, and gradually the user loses a large amount of money and the promised advantageous transaction never takes place.

A huge discount off the “original” price which was previously intentionally increased is the most frequent fraud on discount portals.



EXAMPLE:

Hello my friend.

I am Patrick Chan KW from South Korea, happily married with children, and I am director of Hang Seng Bank Ltd, in charge of International Payments Department. I have confidential business proposal for you. I will need you help me with execution of business project from Hong Kong to your country. It is transfer of huge amount of money. If no risk, nothing gained.

Your quick reaction to this letter is appreciated.

Regards,

Mr. Patrick Chan

Hacking

Hacking means illegal breaking into computer systems. Hackers are skilled computer experts or programmers who can gain access to computers, passwords or confidential data. They tamper with the system or data, create malicious software which controls the computer or detects personal data without the user’s knowledge. The best hackers are capable of breaking through the protection of secret government systems. Phishing, fraudulent appropriation of access data to bank accounts (you will find more about phishing in the chapter on **Misuse of Personal Data**) is one of the hacking techniques. **ClickJacking** is another instrument which is often used on social networks. It is a type of attack where the attacker covers one site with another one. The attacker then tricks the user to click on the icon “Like” or in the case of a video to click on play (e.g. “Look at the funniest video in the world”). If the user does so, the requested site will not open, but a site pre-selected by the attacker will be added to the user’s profile and it will be made accessible to his/her friends. When the attacker has enough of these users, he/she can add malicious software to the original message and thus get into the PCs of the victims.

Illegal downloading and software piracy

The Internet also affords possibilities for material sharing and exchange. If they have a high-speed connection, people can download music, films and software in just a few minutes. At first sight it appears that, if something is on the web, it

belongs to everyone. However, copyrights apply to most of the materials on the web, so only their author or owner is legally entitled to distribute them. Downloading a film without paying or creating a licence key to a programme without buying it is still a theft, even though almost everyone does it. Under Slovak legislation, violation of copyright is a criminal act.

There is a great deal of freely accessible material on the web to which no copyrights apply, such as information posted on freely accessible online encyclopedias (wikipedia), study materials posted by their author, various freely accessible or trial versions of software, etc. However, the use of these materials is limited. Not all parts of software have to be functional if it's a trial version, or the licence has to be purchased after the elapse of a certain period of time. When using information from the web, the source has to be cited just as when bibliography is quoted.

When downloading web content illegally, there is a greater risk of unsolicited content getting into the PC, such as various viruses or spyware which are attached to a file or software (you will find more in the chapter on **Unsolicited Content**).

Forging of money and duty stamps

As scanners and printers of increasingly higher quality become available, children and young people are also more tempted to forge money and other duty stamps and vouchers, such as bus or tram tickets, train tickets, tickets for concerts, etc. In many cases, curiosity, the temptation of easy gain or boyish bravado usually lead groups of boys to scanning and printing banknotes. According to the European Central Bank, 20 and 50 Euro banknotes are the most frequently forged.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST INTERNET FRAUD

Online shopping

When purchasing goods and services on the web, choose a reliable and tested msupplier and read the references about the supplier posted on the web. Check if the .online shop provides complete contact data, carefully read the delivery terms and conditions and the seller's rules in case of complaint. Don't fall victim to suspiciously advantageous bargains; in reality, nothing comes for free.

Check that the price includes VAT, as some sellers intentionally state their prices excluding VAT to make the goods seem cheaper. Do not pay for the goods in advance; the requirement to pay in advance or to send an advance payment is the most common form of fraudulent dealing.

Involve your child in shopping and show him/her how you make decisions and what you take into consideration when shopping online. Teach your child how to be thrifty – talk about how much you can spend shopping and if you really need everything that you yearn for.

Computer protection

Secure your PC against hacking. Activate the firewall, update your antivirus program regularly, install protection against spyware and adware. Secure your web connection with a password and also think about which directories and files you will share on the web and who you give access to them. Choose complicated passwords that cannot be easily guessed; the best is a nonsensical combination of various symbols and digits.

Copyright protection

Do not misuse products protected by copyrights, even if they may be very tempting and easily accessible. Buy legal software, download music and films from official sites. Behave responsibly to others and also direct your child towards such behaviour.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

- **Be careful when shopping online.** Check the conditions and choose a reliable seller, consult your parents. Fraudsters hide on the web too. Do not pay for goods in advance and do not fall for suspiciously low prices.
- **Buy only what you can afford and what you really need.** You have to pay for online purchases with real money too. Buying a lot of really advantageous offers can add up to a really huge bill.
- **If you copy a text from wikipedia, it doesn't mean that you have written a project!** It is someone else's work. You can use it as a source but argument it with some ideas and knowledge of your own.
- **You can give out to others only what is really yours.** This also applies to music, films or programs.
- It is easy to download the latest film from the web, it doesn't cost anything and everyone does it. But it's still illegal. **Everything has a price and you can take only what you pay for.** This holds true for shopping in a store and on the net.



Working with sources

Teach your child what it means to create your own content (e.g. an essay or a project) and how to work with literature and other sources. If the child copies the entire text from the web, without any changes whatsoever, he/she will be graded and marked at school for someone else's work. Explain to your child that he/she must also contribute – with his/her own ideas, rewriting the text, comparing information from various sources – in order to be able to present something under his/her name. It is also important to cite the sources of information mentioned in the text.



GAMES

Name of the game: **False advertisement**
(grades 6-9 of primary school, secondary school)

Procedure: Choose several children who are to cheat their classmates by writing an advertisement for goods or services. The whole class will choose which advertisement was the most tempting and discuss why.

SHEEPLIVE.EU

The fairy-tale Shopping Basket deals with online shopping, buy only what you can afford.

Speaking Trumpet deals with the disclosure of personal data and property information.

Ninety Nine deals with chain letters.



SOURCES:

<http://www.euractiv.sk/bezpecny-internet>

<http://www.saferinternet.at/themen/internetabzocke>

<http://www.saferinternet.at/themen/urheberrechte>

<http://www.wikipedia.org>

Bezpečnosť dětí na internetu, Rádce zodpovědného rodiče – Lenka Eckertová,
Daniel Dočekal, 2013

INTERNET ACQUAINTANCES

Making friends online, meeting strangers, grooming, sexual abuse

The web is a space where people can present themselves, where they communicate with their friends and relatives, where they develop existing relationships or build new ones. The possibility to meet people with similar interests, to find new friends or partners is alluring for children and adults alike. Making friends online, however, is also a risky business – you can never be sure who is on the other end.



TERMS

Disinhibition effect: people have fewer inhibitions due to the ostensible anonymity of the web, they are more careless, they reveal intimate details about themselves more quickly and easily, they do things they would never contemplate in the real world.

Grooming: gradual building of an intimate, friendly relationship with a child so that the child is less wary and agrees to a meeting. Sexual abuse of the child is the most common objective of grooming.

Sexual abuse: exploitation of a person younger than 15 years of age by an adult for any activities of a sexual nature. The age limit for sexual abuse increases to 18 in cases where the child is in some way dependent on the adult (relative, teacher, tutor) or if the perpetrator rewards the child in some way for sexual activities.

Sexual violence: forcing the child to indulge in sexual activities by force or under threat of violence.

Social engineering: method of psychological manipulation in order to obtain intimate information from the victim.

Making friends online and meeting strangers

Meeting new people on the web is quick and dynamic, it enables you to overcome distances and get into contact with someone who you would otherwise never have a chance to meet. Many people have found not only new friends, but also life partners on the web. However, some people have equally become the victims of fraudsters or violent offenders.

The anonymity of the virtual world creates an ostensible feeling of safety and encourages us to open up more quickly and set aside our inhibitions. We often forget to employ the defensive mechanisms that we use when meeting new people in reality, as we get to know them gradually and it takes some time to gain confidence in each other.

In reality, we observe many signs that help us to assess the others. We see what the person looks like, how he/she talks and the gestures he/she makes: according

to his/her reactions and eye contact we are able to better estimate whether he/ /she is telling the truth or lying. In this way, we are able to take note of signals that warn us of danger. When communicating on the web these subtle signals are not mavailable.

Therefore, it is far easier to lie or to pretend to be someone else on the web. It is not difficult to create a false profile, to use someone else's picture or to conceal one's real intentions. Fraudsters and dangerous people can frequent chat-rooms, Internet forums and discussion boards, dating websites or telephone lines. That is why it is always necessary to check the information.

GROOMING AND SEXUAL ABUSE USING THE WEB

In addition to financial frauds and blackmailing, the possibility of meeting a sexual predator on the web represents a great risk. The predator uses a false identity and tries to win the affection of the victim and trick him/her to agree to a meeting.

However, most of the cases of sexual abuse on the web start with the gradual building of a relationship and gaining the trust of the child. This is known as grooming from the English word "groom" – to prepare oneself, to care about one's appearance. The sexual predator grooming a child is grooming him/herself positively – he/she pretends to be the child's best friend and thus wins over the child for his/her goals.

The predator locates a vulnerable and easily accessible victim on the web. A large amount of posted personal data, pictures, the willingness to communicate with strangers, a high degree of gullibility, quick openness to sensitive issues of the child's life, disappointment and suffering currently experienced, loneliness, willingness to meet the predator after a short time, readiness to accede to the conditions of the meeting set by the predator – all these serve as signals for the predator. He/she usually addresses a large number of children at once and searches for those that show interest and suit his/her needs (they live nearby, their parents do not check what they are doing, but also they don't have friends or they have problems at home, e.g. their parents are getting divorced). The predator then communicates with the child; he/she is ready to be patient and build the relationship over a long period of time. He/she wants to win the child over so that the child meets him/her voluntarily. The predator can but doesn't necessarily have to lie about his/her identity; after some time he/she generally admits that he/she is older than the child, even though he/she might continue to lie about the age. The predator constructs his/her strategy around becoming an older friend, protector of the child, he/she offers the safety and acceptance that the child might be missing at home or among peers. Boys and girls who start to use the web, chat-rooms and social networks to a greater extent usually become victims of grooming.

But it is not at all easy to prove the guilt of the perpetrator. We know of several cases when the offender lured a child into meeting him and the child reported this to the police. Police officers waited for the offender at the meeting point, but no criminal

offence was committed. The perpetrator later contended that he lured the child to the meeting just to show him/her how not to behave and teach him/her a lesson.

Phases of grooming:

1. Building trust and efforts to isolate the victim

First of all, the predator tries to build a confidential relationship with the identified child. He/she presents him/herself as someone who understands the child, understands the child's problems and wants to help him/her to solve them. He/she wants to be a good friend of the child, someone who can be relied on. At the same time, he/she tries to isolate the child, he/she convinces the child not to tell anyone about their relationship, to delete their conversations, he/she tries to find out whether the parents check what their child is doing on the web.

2. Strengthening the relationship and bribery

Once the predator has won the child over, he/she continues to develop the relationship. He/she requests more detailed information (mobile phone number, address), talks with the child more and more about intimate topics, such as partner and relationship problems and sexual activities, thus creating a feeling of intimacy. At the same time, he/she gives the child a variety of gifts (money, credit for the mobile phone, expensive toys and clothing).

3. Emotional dependency of the victim

The predator has become irreplaceable for the child. He/she has become the person closest to the child who knows all the child's intimate secrets. The child doesn't want to lose this relationship; at the request of the predator he/she lies to his/her parents about how and with whom he/she spends time, he/she no longer tells them about his/her emotions. The predator creates the impression in the child that their relationship is full of understanding and love and that it will also endure into the future. He/she draws the child more and more into his/her net, talks about how exceptional and unique their relationship is, requires more and more from the child, such as intimate pictures of cybersex via the web-cam.

4. Face-to-face meeting

In the next phase, the predator tries to arrange a meeting in person. He/she can entice the child to an interesting activity, for instance going to the cinema, a disco or call the child to his/her home. The predator is already confident about the relationship with the child; he/she knows that the child won't tell anyone about their meeting.

5. Sexual harassment, sexual abuse

In the final phase, the offender abuses the child. He/she either convinces the child to agree to sex for love of the predator, for their relationship, or he/she manipulates, blackmails or exerts pressure on the child (he/she threatens to disclose their relationship to the child's parents or to post intimate pictures on the web). In this way, the predator can abuse the child repeatedly, frequently and over a long time.



EXAMPLES:

Prague, Czech Republic, 2009. A 35-year-old porter searched on the web for boys from socially disadvantaged environments, he found out what their interests were and he promised them money or to make their wishes come true if they sent nude pictures of themselves. Then he invited them to Prague as a special treat. There he abused the boys, paid them for sex or forced them to have sex by blackmailing them (he threatened to post their pictures on the web). The court found him guilty and sentenced him to 8 years in prison.

Sedgefield, United Kingdom, 2009. Ashleigh, a 17-year-old student, met 19-year-old Peter on Facebook. After chatting for some time she agreed to meet him in person. She told her mother that she was going to sleep at her friend's. In reality, a 32-year-old homeless man was using a false profile. He raped and killed the girl. Her body was found in a ditch next to the road.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST DANGEROUS WEB ACQUAINTANCES

Take interest in your child's activities on the web

Talk to the child about everything he/she does in the course of the day. Even what he/she does on the web, which sites he/she visits and what he/she has encountered. Encourage your child to ask you if there is something he/she doesn't understand. It is also best if the child tells you when something unpleasant happens to him/her or if someone hurts him/her.

Set rules for meeting new people on the web

Talk to your child about the risks associated with meeting new people on the web, advise him/her how he/she can protect him/herself more (e.g. by choosing the right profile pictures, not posting personal data, allowing access only for friends, communicating only with people that the child also knows in real life). If your child meets someone new on the web, tell him/her how to proceed. Insist on the child taking more time to get to know the new person, to check the identity and honesty of the new friend. Also put in place rules for personal meetings with someone who the child knows only from the web. The child should let you know where, when and whom he/she is meeting, he/she should not go alone to the first meeting but, for instance, with a friend, choose a well-known location with many people. Your child can also arrange a check call – his/her friend can call one hour into the meeting to ask if everything is okay, and, if need be, help him/her.

Build trust

The older your child is, the less you should check and the more trust you should place in him/her. If you subject your child to excessive supervision, he/she will not change his/her behaviour, but just try to hide everything from you to escape your excessive attention and will resist by violating your bans. You need to have faith that you have

taught your child everything important and that he/she will make the right decisions on his/her own.

If your child is a teenager, respect his/her right to privacy, own life and experiences that your child will want to share not with you but his/her peers. You can hardly expect an adolescent to go to a date accompanied by his/her parents, but you can agree that he/she will tell you about these dates and take a friend along.

Personal boundaries

Respect the child's boundaries. Do not force him/her into touches, hugs or displays of affection if he/she doesn't want them. Even displays of affection from relatives and friends are not necessarily pleasant for the child. The child has the right to refuse or accept them, and he/she is not obliged to provide them on request if he/she doesn't feel the need to do so. If the child learns in the family that he/she can refuse what is unpleasant to him/her, he/she will find it easier to refuse such displays when provided or requested by strangers, particularly when contacting the child on the web.

Experiences of your child and development of relationships

Take note of what is going on with your child, especially when his/her behaviour suddenly changes. React to the child's current needs, talk to him/her about his/her concerns. Also pay attention to the relations your child fosters in real life; help him/her to develop them. If the child has the chance to confide in parents or friends, he/she is not going to look for a close relationship with a stranger on the web.

WHAT TO TAKE NOTE OF:



Your child could have become a victim of grooming or sexual abuse if:

- he/she secretly deletes the chat history, e-mails or SMS;
- he/she hides the screen or quickly turns off whatever is running as soon as you appear;
- he/she is suddenly afraid of certain places or people; various psychosomatic symptoms occur – sleeping problems, nightmares;
- his/her behaviour suddenly changes, the child suddenly becomes withdrawn, sad, timorous, frightened;
- he/she avoids conversations about what he/she does on the PC or in his/her free time;
- he/she shuts out family and friends, and at the same time denies that something is going on;
- sexual motifs appear in his/her drawings, child games or desires, he/she imitates sexual practices with his/her toys, dolls;
- he/she does not ask for pocket money or money for topping up his/her mobile phone for a suspiciously long time;
- he/she has new presents, toys, clothing, topped-up mobile phone or money that you have not given him/her and doesn't want to say where it has come from.

The topic of sex and sexuality

Do not underestimate this topic, but don't overestimate it either. Don't impose a taboo on sex and sexuality, they are part of life and partner relations. The child is interested in this topic and wants to know more about it – answer in a manner appropriate to the child's age. You should be interested in your child's opinions and his/her relation to the opposite sex. If you avoid this topic, your child will learn that it is something he/she cannot talk about with you – not even when he/she experiences something unpleasant or when someone hurts him/her.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **Be careful about what you post on the web about yourself.** The more you reveal, the more vulnerable you are. If you post your e-mail address, telephone number or address on the web, anyone can locate you. Even people who want to hurt you. If you write a lot about yourself, your interests, ideas or emotions, you open yourself up to others. If you post naked pictures or pictures in risqué poses, you give others the signal that you are willing to do anything.
- **You can never know who is on the other side of the web.** It is very easy to lie and pretend to be someone else on the web. Be especially careful with anyone who poses as a teenager but knows nothing about things that your friends know.
- **Take your time when meeting someone on the web.** Write to the other person for a longer period of time, call each other, talk together via the web-cam. Before you go to a meeting, get information from people who know your new friend.
- **Be extremely careful if you are meeting someone who you know only from the web.** Choose a place that you know well and where you will not be alone, take a friend along or tell your parents when, where and who you are meeting. Don't ever get into the car of your new friend at the meeting.
- **Take note of strange and suspicious behaviour.** It is strange when an adult wants a child and not someone his/her own age to be his/her best friend or girl/boyfriend, even though he/she tries to explain or justify it somehow. Be careful even if someone tries to convince you not to tell anyone about your web friendship, when he/she constantly asks about personal matters or asks for nude photos of yourself.
- **Verify whether the pictures of your new friend are not forged.** Use www.tineye.com or Google pictures.
- **Remember that nothing is for free.** If someone gives you presents on the web or tops up your mobile phone, sooner or later he/she will definitely want something in return.
- **If something is too perfect, it will not be real.** If someone convinces you on the web that he/she loves you more than anything in the world, would do anything for you and wants nothing in return, he/she probably has a reason for doing so. Perfect people and flawless relationships exist only in fairy-tales and in our dreams.
- **Trust your gut response.** If your web friend wants something from you that you don't like, you find strange or unpleasant, don't ever let yourself be talked into doing it. Refuse it quite firmly and inform an adult about it.

You should realise that children are not only victims on the web. In some researches, up to a third of children admitted that they send a risqué picture or video willingly.

Consequences of sexual abuse for the child

When the child becomes a victim of undesired one-off or repeated sexual abuse, it results in negative consequences for the child. Such an experience affects all the basic areas of the child's life, i.e. the biological, psychological and social spheres. A child is not yet prepared for sexual activities as far as his/her physical, physiological and mental development is concerned. The consequences of undesired early sexual activities, discovering and experiencing them, threaten the child's further development. The symptoms of a serious mental trauma can occur in the child's behaviour – fear, anxiety, depression, loss of self-respect, negative self-image, low opinion of one's own body, loss of trust in adults. Many children also react with increased morbidity, reduction of interests, apathy, deterioration in school performance, disruption of relations with peers, even a complete withdrawal into isolation. Children who were the subjects of sexual abuse carry this experience into their adolescence and adulthood. They may reject people of the opposite sex, be afraid of partnership and exhibit a revulsion to intimacy, or they themselves may treat others in a sexually aggressive manner.

Help, support and cooperation with experts is inevitable

A child is not able to process such an experience on his/her own and is generally not able to fight back in the future. He/she inevitably needs help and expert and consistent protection from adults.

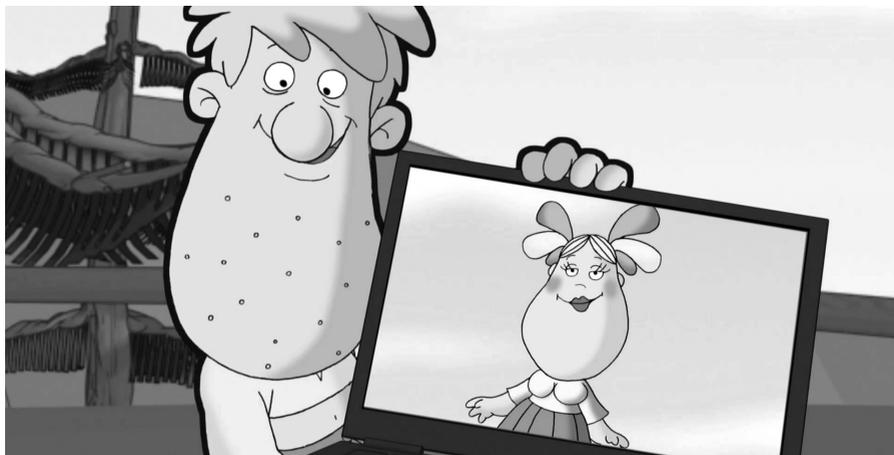
It is important to act quickly, calmly and very sensitively. The child should gain a sense of security and be assured that he/she is not to blame for what has happened. It is important to visit a doctor (pediatrician, gynaecologist) as soon as possible and to report the incident to the police. The child (and often the parents, also) need psychological crisis intervention and subsequent professional care (therapy, counselling) because untreated and unprocessed experiences could accompany the child throughout his/her life.

Professionals working on the Pomoc.sk (116 111) helpline can provide you with counselling and contacts to experts.

GAMES

Name of the game: **Mommyyy** (grades 1-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Simulate web communication, ask the children questions and they should answer. The only rule is that when the communication starts to threaten the children, they have to shout: "Mommyyy!" when they get "weird" questions. If the question is normal, i.e. safe, children just give an answer. Examples of ordinary questions: "Is the sun shining on your street too today?" "Which school subject do you like most?" "Which is your favourite singer?" "What colour is your mouse?"... Examples of suspicious questions: "Do you tell anyone that we write to each other on the web?" "Where is



your computer?” “Do your parents see the screen when you write to someone?” “Do your parents check your computer?” “Could you please delete our SMS/e-mails when we finish?” “Do you walk home from school alone?” “Can you promise me not to tell anyone that we are friends?” “Will you tell anyone if I top up your mobile phone?”

“Do you want to be a model?” “I am a photographer. Could you send me your picture in a bathing suit? You can’t be shy if you want to be a model.” “I am (name of a celebrity), do you want to meet me?” “Are you at home now?” When children shout “Mommyyy!” it is good to interrupt the game and ask them why they think that the answer to such a question can threaten them. Alternate normal questions with suspicious ones (signalling possible danger). Teach the children to think about the meaning of the questions and help them to recognise and realise possible threats.

Name of the game: **How to get any picture from a boy** (gr. 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Choose a charming boy and a pretty girl. Explain to all the other children that the chosen girl is just your false profile that you created in order to communicate with the boy. The girl will just repeat your words that you write to the boy on the web. The other children are to invent answers on behalf of the boy. The boy will only repeat what the children want him to answer to you. Start with: “Hi, I am Anne. I found you on the web. I like you very much.” The children tell the boy to say for instance: “I like you too.” Then you continue through the girl: “Will you write to me? I am sending you my picture, but I only have a picture in my bathing suit from the seaside, when I was there with my parents.” Explain to the children that the pictures you are sending are also false; you collected them on the web. The children answer and the boy repeats: “I will write to you. If you send me a picture in your bathing suit, I will send you one of me in my bathing suit.” The girl a.k.a the predator follows his/her objective: “How handsome you are! I will now take my picture on my mobile phone and send it to you. I am just going to bathe, I hope you don’t mind and you like the picture. Send me such a picture too.” If the boy refuses – children don’t want to send a semi-nude picture, answer through the girl: “That’s not

fair. I sent you my picture and now you don't want to! Are you afraid or what? If you want, I will send you another one, but I won't be your friend if you don't send me yours." The children instruct the boy to send a semi-nude picture. The predator ends the game: "Now I have your nude picture and I will send it to your parents, classmates and teachers if you don't do everything that I want from you!" At the end, explain to the children how easy it is to manipulate someone like that and to obtain intimate pictures or videos from him/her. Also talk about which sentences are most convincing, which they could not resist (e.g. appreciation of their beauty, emphasising their courage...) and also what would be the more appropriate reaction to the individual requirements. (Or play the game the other way round – the boy tries to trick the girl into sending her pictures.)

Name of the game: **How to get any picture from a girl**
(grades 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Divide the class into two groups. Their task will be to write a dialogue of a fake photographer or a modeling agency and a naive girl. The aim is to trick the girl into sending them some nude photos. An alternative game is to trick her into photo shooting directly in the agency. Each of the groups then reads their dialogue and the one with the most cunning and refined story is the winner. They exchange the stories afterwards and fill in the answers and questions that could help disguise the aggressor and protect the victim. At the end, explain to the children – just like in the game "How to get any picture from a boy" – how easy it is to manipulate someone like that and to obtain intimate pictures or videos from him/her. Start a discussion, where you ask which sentences were most convincing and most difficult to resist (e.g. an opportunity to do a photo shoot abroad, becoming a beauty queen etc.) and also what would be the most appropriate reaction to the individual requirements (look for the recommendations of a photographer or an agency on the internet, show the agreement to parents before signing, go to first photo shoot with parents etc.).

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The fairy-tale **Secret Friend** deals with grooming – building a relationship with the aim of sexual abuse.

Masquerade deals with the problem that you never know who is on the other side of the web or mobile phone.

Harassment deals with sexting, sexual harassment on the web.



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CYBERBULLYING

Internet bullying, electronic bullying, online bullying, cyberstalking, happy slapping

Cyberbullying is one of the most frequent phenomena on the web. It is nothing new, just something that now occurs in a different space. With the distribution of modern technologies, a substantial part of bullying has moved to the virtual environment. It is easier for aggressors to hurt someone they don't have to look directly in the eye; they perceive the emotions and wounds of the victim to a lesser degree, they are less aware of the gravity of what they have done and feel diminished responsibility for it. Such bullying may seem to them as just a kind of harmless fun while, at the same time, the aggressor is protected by anonymity. Virtual bullying is even more serious for the victim – he/she cannot escape from it, not even in the safety of his/ her home. If the victim uses a mobile phone or the Internet, the aggressors can get to him/her any time of the day and in any place.



TERMS

Bullying: repeated and deliberate behaviour with the intention of ridiculing, hurting, humiliating someone. The aggressor exerts his/her power over the victim.

Cyberbullying (electronic bullying, cybermobbing): a form of bullying where new technologies are used, such as the PC, Internet, mobile phone. It occurs in the virtual environment using various services and instruments, such as e-mail, IM (instant messenger – e.g. Skype, ICQ), chat-rooms, discussion boards, social networks, sites for posting pictures and videos, blogs, SMS, phone calls.

Cyberstalking (online stalking): continuous stalking of someone in the virtual environment, often linked with harassment, threatening behaviour and intimidation.

Happy slapping: violent or sexual attacks on victims (many times chosen at random) who are filmed on a mobile phone. The attackers then send the videos to others or post them on the web.

Difference between cyberbullying and conventional bullying:

- **It doesn't have time and space limits:** while conventional bullying is usually limited to one space, e.g. school or job, in the case of cyberbullying attacks can occur anytime and anywhere – the victim just needs to have a mobile phone or to be connected to the web.
- **It spreads rapidly around a large audience:** conventional bullying is usually known to the direct participants in the given group. In the case of cyberbullying, any content posted on the web or sent via mobile phone or e-mail can quickly get to a large number of people and the distribution of such content is not controllable.

- **Perpetrators can remain anonymous:** they themselves feel safer and are less cognisant of the effects of their behaviour as they do not see their victim's reaction. The perpetrator's anonymity leads to even greater suspicion, uncertainty and fear on the part of the victim – he/she does not know who to face up to, or where the next attack will arrive from. Anyone could be the perpetrator.
- **Cyberbullies can get round barriers more readily:** due to anonymity and the use of technology, it is easier for the perpetrators to attack someone who they would not dare attack in the real world due to their authority or position. Hence, teachers or superiors can easily become the victims of cyberbullying.
- **Cyberbullies use psychological means to cause harm and manipulate:** unlike conventional bullying, the perpetrator and the victim are not in direct contact, no visible traces of physical harm (injuries, bruises, damaged clothing, etc.) remain after cyberbullying.

What can be understood as cyberbullying:

Insults and scolding: by means of comments on pictures and videos or on the walls of social networks, sending insulting messages by e-mail, chat or mobile phone, scolding in chat-rooms, anonymous phone calls.

Harassment, intimidation, threats and blackmail: repeated pestering by ringing, anonymous calls or unsolicited messages on the mobile phone, cramming the email box with unsolicited mail, sending viruses, threats of harm or death. The perpetrator can also hack into the victim's profile, change the password and subsequently modify the profile. He/she blackmails the victim by promising to return the profile to its original state after the fulfilment of various conditions. The victim's pictures or videos can also be used for blackmail.

Posting embarrassing, intimate or modified pictures or videos: these can be pictures or videos that the victim has not given his/her consent to distribute, that have been created by photoshopping (e.g. the victim's face was attached to a naked body or the original picture is distorted). Happy slapping is a separate category – videos that depict aggressive or sexual attacks on the victim.

Spreading personal information or rumours: posting private communications or smearing someone on social networks can be an example.

Exclusion from a group: for instance from the team in online computer games, from the group on social networks, ignoring someone in communication and discussion groups.

Identity theft, creation of false and taunting profiles, hate groups: the aggressor gains access to the victim's data and orders various goods on the web under his/ her name. The perpetrator creates a profile for the victim that mocks and humiliates him or her, or establishes a group on the social network which presents a negative attitude towards the victim. If the perpetrator gains access to the victim's email box or profile, he/she can delete messages or communicate with the victim's friends and acquaintances, attack other people, spread false information.

Cyberbullying: often occurs among children and teenagers. It even happens that children bully their teacher in this way. Cyberbullying can also occur among adults – between colleagues at work or between ex-partners after they split. Children are more likely to create taunting profiles, sites and photoshopped pictures or videos; they make taunting and humiliating videos or they hack into the victim's profile; adults are more inclined towards cyberstalking, blackmailing, smearing and ruining the victim's reputation.

Cyberstalking: it can take various forms and causes. First of all, the stalker seeks to gain power over the victim, manipulate the victim. He/she might not even assess his/her behaviour realistically, he/she either is wholly unaware that he/she is hurting the victim, or is unable to assess to what degree he/she is hurting the victim. Sometimes the stalker stalks the victim via various browsers, views the victim's profile on social networks, follows his/her communication in chat-rooms. The stalker can also use a combination of different forms of mental pressure – malicious comments, pestering with SMS, e-mails and calling, also threatening, blackmailing, smearing the victim with his/her peers, soliciting information from others, hacking into the victim's profile. "Love" is a frequent pretext for stalking. The stalker can pursue the chosen victim, this way he/she tries to get to know the victim better or get closer to him/her. A break-up can also be the trigger for cyberbullying. The rejected partner seeks revenge or is desperately trying to communicate with his/her ex. Jealous partners, in turn, want to have oversight and control over what their partner does, who he/she talks to.



EXAMPLES OF CYBERBULLYING (accounts of children):

"Stealing profiles is quite common. It was possible to find passwords on Google or there is software available that can reveal passwords. And then I write to his friends from his profile and I insult them..."

"Once we made fun of one of our classmates. We hacked into his profile and then we wrote to a girl he likes."

"One girl wrote me asking what kind of girl I am that my pictures are posted on some sex chatroom. I looked it up, someone took a picture of my face and photoshopped it onto naked bodies downloaded from the web."

"Once we created a group for a teacher on Facebook. He was new and rather weird. Then gradually the whole school joined us and we all made fun of him."

Facts about cyberbullying

Research by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in collaboration with the civic association eSlovensko, o. z. presented the following results:

- Young people encounter most frequently (49.8%) scolding and taunting on the web, smearing or spreading false information is ranked second (42.6%), 5.9% of respondents cite cyberbullying as such.

- Young people admit that they most frequently “mock others” (59%) on the web, taunt or scold someone (49.8%), take pictures or videos of others in embarrassing situations and then post the pictures or videos on the web (16.5%).
- 65.4% of cyberbullying victims know the identity of their aggressor. Most often it is someone they know in person (either from school or their environment) or someone they know from the web (18.5%).
- If adolescents encounter cyberbullying, they mostly do not tell anyone about it. If they do confide in someone, it is usually a friend (21.1% of cases). Only 8.9% of young people told an adult about the incident – 6.9% a parent and 2% a teacher.

What are the consequences of cyberbullying:

- neglecting school duties, failing in school, avoiding school; if the victim is an adult – similar problems at work;
- psychosomatic problems (health problems caused by psychological causes) – stomachache, sleep disorders;
- feelings of shame, embarrassment, humiliation, sadness, depression, anxiety;
- constant fear and feeling of endangerment;
- feeling of failure, decline in self-confidence and trust in people;
- despair and hopelessness;
- violence towards others, revenge;
- self-harm, suicide.

EXAMPLES OF CYBERBULLYING FROM ABROAD:



Danzig, Poland, 2006. Classmates selected Anna Halman as their target for bullying. They undressed her, touched her and simulated rape. They shot the scene (about twenty minutes long) on a mobile phone. The girl could not cope with this trauma and hanged herself.

Vermont, USA, 2003. 13-year-old Ryan Halligan was exposed to cyberbullying for an extended period of time. Classmates spread rumours on the web that he was gay. The girl he liked started to chat with him on the web, and subsequently she posted his love confessions on the web. Then Ryan committed suicide.

Missouri, USA, 2006. 13-year-old Megan Meier met 16-year-old Josh on the web. They wrote to each other for some time, then she fell in love with him. However, in reality Josh was 49-year-old Lori Drew, the mother of Megan’s friend who wanted to find out what Megan thought about her daughter. When she had the impression that their virtual relationship had gone too far, she tried to end it by treating Megan rudely – she scolded her, posted insulting comments about her and wrote that the world would be a better place without her. But her plan to offend Megan and thus make her end her communication with Josh was not successful. Megan committed suicide.



WHAT TO TAKE NOTE OF:

A child might be cyberbullied if he/she:

- suddenly stops using the computer;
- seems nervous, uncertain or sad when reading e-mails, chats or SMS;
- seems angry, depressed or frustrated after leaving the computer;
- takes refuge in illnesses
- does not want to go to school or among people;
- avoids conversations about what he/she does on the computer;
- withdraws from the family and friends, and at the same time denies that something is going on;
- takes refuge in the world of fantasy and computer games.

A child might be a cyberbully if he/she:

- quickly turns off the monitor or closes open screens in the PC if you approach;
- laughs in an exaggerated manner when using the PC;
- spends time at the PC with friends, laughs excessively with them, but does not want to say what they are doing;
- avoids conversations about what he/she does on the PC;
- uses several online accounts or addresses that are not even his/hers;
- had a former conflict with a friend or teacher which remained unresolved, and the child still harbours feelings of injustice and anger.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST CYBERBULLYING

Posting personal data, pictures and videos

Remember that any personal data (such as information on your ethnicity or nationality, your state of health, your intimate life, passwords to accounts and profiles, telephone number), pictures or videos can be misused by the cyberbully to contact, ridicule, threaten or blackmail you. Therefore, think carefully about what you are going to post on the web and to whom you are making these data available.

React immediately

Do something about any bullying immediately. The longer you ignore the situation, the worse it can get and the more serious its consequences may be. First of all, let the cyberbully know that his/her behaviour is annoying you and if he/she doesn't stop, you will take measures. But don't communicate any further with the bully, do not explain anything, do not attempt to dissuade him/her. It is your reaction – feedback that the bully expects from you.

Maintain evidence

Even though aggressors think that they can remain anonymous, this is not quite true. Every activity in cyberspace leave traces which can either help to identify the perpetrator or serve as evidence of the bullying. Keep the evidence (e-mails, SMS, MMS, chat history, websites). You don't have to read the messages but use them as evidence. Cyberbullies change their e-mail addresses and identities, but it will be possible from the saved e-mails to identify whether it is the same person. Take a picture of SMS and MMS together with the sender's number, date and time. Keep a log of the SMS and MMS received. Take a screenshot in the case of websites with a false profile.

Block and report

In e-mail or chat communications you can set up blocking of messages from a person who bullies you. You can report bullying in a chat-room or on social networks to the site administrator. You can also resort to the school if cyberbullying occurs among classmates, to the school psychologist, the Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling and Prevention Centre where the staff are trained to deal with bullying or to the Police. Children can bear criminal responsibility from the age of 14 years and they can be prosecuted for blackmailing, slander or issuing threats.

Develop relations

As research results have also confirmed, cyberbullying most frequently has its origins in the real environment. From there, conflicts are transferred to the virtual world. That means that the best form of cyberbullying prevention is to develop relations in reality, to work on conflict resolution, to boost the ability to empathise.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS A CYBERBULLY

Your child may become a victim of cyberbullying, but also could be the one who hurts someone else. Sometimes the child does it because he/she does not realise when it stops being fun, but sometimes something more serious can be the cause. No one hurts others just like that, without any cause – there is some hidden pain behind every

act of violence. The child may use cyberbullying to relieve accumulated tension, to gain appreciation within a group, to exhibit his/her power or for fear of becoming a victim. In whatever case, a child who hurts someone is also a child who needs help. Talk together about the causes of his/her behaviour, about his/her worries and your mutual relations, help the child to find a way to make up for what he/she has done. You can also have recourse to an expert, a child psychologist who will help you find a solution.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **Be careful what you post about yourself on the web.** Consider carefully who you are going to give your e-mail address, telephone number or address to, who you allow access to your pictures or profile, who you allow to take pictures of you or make a video. By being careful, you protect yourself against possible harm.
- **If someone taunts you on the web, scolds you, threatens you or harms you in any other way, he/she has no right to do so** and you can always take a stand against such treatment. Let the aggressor know that you are not prepared to be treated in this way and quit communication with him/her. If you try to convince him/her, you only encourage him/her to continue – he/she actually wants to see your reaction and watch your fear.
- **If the cyberbullying doesn't stop, don't keep it to yourself.** If something is very unpleasant for you or disturbs you, it won't stop there. Even adults have difficulties coping with repeated malice, intimidation or threats. Inform an adult – parent, teacher, psychologist, police about the cyberbullying, contact the helpline Pomoc.sk (116 111). You have done nothing wrong and there is no reason for you to be ashamed or to suffer.
- You can block the aggressor on the web or report him/her to the administrator of the site. If you experience attacks, taunting or threats, **save and retain all evidence** (SMS messages, e-mails, websites, chats).
- **Cyberbullying is wrong and can really hurt someone.** Consider carefully what you are doing on the web, either for fun, anger or the desire for revenge. What may seem to be trifling to you may be really hurtful to somebody else. If you taunt, scold or threaten someone on the web, you become a “cyberbully”. Remember that some deeds cannot be deleted or taken back. If you hurt others, you may be sorry for it some day and your behaviour may later come back to haunt you.
- **If you become aware that someone is hurting others on the web or via a mobile phone,** taunting and humiliating them, do not keep silent. Help the victim, stand up for the victim, tell an adult about the cyberbullying. You can be the one who prevents bullying, violence and injustice. If the cyberbully sees that the victim is not alone, he/she often quits what he/she was doing.



GAMES

Name of the game: **Play the victim of bullying** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Talk to the children about how the bullied victim might feel and behave (shame, depression, loss of self-confidence, loss of trust, hopelessness, violence and revenge, loneliness, symptoms of self-harm, avoiding school...). Gradually, select children to play the individual emotions or behaviours in front of the others. They can use a mirror to rehearse the facial expressions and gestures. The audience have to guess which emotion or behaviour is being acted, which child played it best and why. The game should help the children to become more perceptive and to take notice of someone worrying or being bullied in their surroundings.

Name of the game: **What SMS have I received?** (grades 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: The children write several SMS on a blackboard/paper. Positive SMS but also negative ones. SMS that want to make others happy and, by contrast, SMS that can hurt. The children's clothing will be the subject of the SMS. For instance, "You have a cool T-shirt", "Your T-shirt doesn't match your trousers" or "Your glasses are sexy", "Those glasses don't suit you". Choose and seat the child in the middle and send him/her an SMS. Write the individual SMS on pieces of paper and the child will take one. The child has to play how he/she would behave and feel after having really received such an SMS. The others guess which of the SMS the child has received. Elaborate with the children about what they have noticed, which facial expressions,

gestures. What do eye, facial expressions, hand gestures reveal and which of these can give away the victim of bullying. Further discuss what it is like to get an SMS like this or receive many SMS messages, what each child is more sensitive to – what would hurt them most, what they would do if something like this happened to them or their friend.

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The fairy-tale **Revenge** deals with cyberstalking.

Snow Game deals with recording violent and humiliating scenes – happy slapping.

Thick Neck deals with cyberbullying.

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MOBILE PHONES

Risks of using a mobile phone, theft of mobile phone, etiquette for mobile communications, happy slapping

Mobile phones are no longer just ordinary “telephones”. Technological development has made it possible for them to be used more extensively, it has linked the advantages of a telephone with the possibilities of the web in a single instrument. Thanks to the mobile phone, children and teenagers can send not only text and image messages but also e-mails, fast-mail, connect to websites and social networks, make pictures and videos, share created materials, play games or watch where their relatives and friends are at the moment. The mobile phone has even become a symbol of affiliation to a certain group and a yardstick of social status.



TERMS

Bluetooth: technology for wireless communication; thanks to Bluetooth, two different items of equipment within a range of 10 metres can be connected. It serves for communication and data transfer.

Wi-Fi: is an abbreviation of „wireless fidelity“ – a technology that allows electronic devices connection to the internet wirelessly using radio waves even by means of mobile phone. The area with an access point is called hotspot.

Happy slapping: violent or sexual attacks on victims (often chosen at random) who are filmed on the mobile phone. The attackers then pass on the videos or post them on the web.

SMS spoofing: sending SMS messages from false numbers. The recipient gets the impression that the SMS was sent by someone he/she knows. The message can be filled with profanities, threats, erotic content, etc.

Research about children in the virtual environment carried out in 2008 by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in collaboration with the civic association eSlovensko, o.z. showed that 95.7% of primary school children use a mobile phone. 90% of them have their own mobile phone. Younger children use the mobile phone belonging to their parents or someone else. They use it mostly to call and send SMS, but also for other activities, such as taking pictures, making videos, listening to music or playing games.

Mobile phone advantages and disadvantages for children and teenagers

Most people nowadays cannot imagine their life without a mobile phone. The same holds true for children and teenagers. Mobile phones have many advantages, but they also represent risks, and some advantages can at the same time be a disadvantage.

ADVANTAGES:

- **Communication anytime and anywhere:** thanks to mobile phones you can keep in contact with your family and friends, are always reachable and can reach others. Children call their friends if they want to confide their experiences to them, they can spontaneously arrange a meeting or call their parents that they will be late. At the same time their parents can check on them, discover what they are up to or where they are at the moment.
- **Quick help:** whatever happens, thanks to a mobile phone, help is always available to the child – either from the parents, friends, the emergency line or helpline for children.
- **More than just a telephone:** mobile phones have many useful functions. Besides calling and sending SMS, children use them to listen to music, capture their current experiences in pictures or videos, browse the Internet, play games, update their profile on social networks or to chat.
- **Mobile phone as a private place:** the mobile phone is usually the exclusive property of the child who does not have to share it with anyone. The child can modify the phone according to his/her taste – choose the ring tone, wallpaper or music that he/she likes, make his/her own pictures. Communication through the mobile phone belongs exclusively to the child – if he/she is calling, he/she can leave the room. If the child is sending SMS, he/she doesn't have to be afraid that someone will overhear what he/she is talking about, or read the message over his/her shoulder.

DISADVANTAGES:

- **Fees and costs:** even though calling or sending an SMS is now relatively cheap, children tend to be careless when it comes to charges for calling or sending SMS. They are also easier prey for operators of audiotext numbers, where they call, send SMS to competitions or download various paid apps. Mobile phone bills or a top-up expended too fast often become the reason for conflicts between children and their parents.
- **Continuous reachability:** the possibility to communicate anytime and anywhere can sometimes be a burden. Teenagers, in particular, are not very happy if their parents call them and check on them at every moment. And being bombarded by SMS messages or getting calls from friends at night isn't necessarily always pleasant.
- **Mobile phone as a disruptive factor:** in some situations the use of a mobile phone can disturb others. A mobile phone ringing during the cinema or theatre performance, loud calls about one's private life on means of transport can be annoying and intrusive.
- **Not picking up the phone as a sign of lack of interest:** nowadays, when everyone carries a mobile phone with them, we can wrongly assume that the person we called is angry at us if he/she does not answer. However, the reality can be quite different.

RISKS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS OF USING MOBILE PHONES

When using mobile phones with all their modern conveniences, the range of risks gets broader. There are not only risks associated with calling (e.g. anonymous calls) but also threats related to use of the web (these are described in more detail in the chapters on the individual risks).

Misuse of personal data, pictures, videos

Children often show a lack of caution when using mobile phones. They lend their phones to each other, they give their PIN or phone number to anyone, they send their pictures and videos to each other, they let others take pictures or make videos of them in different, even compromising, situations. Anyone can access their personal data if they use bluetooth. Children lose track of what happens to their data. They can then be misused by anyone to contact, taunt or blackmail the child. (Also see **Misuse of Personal Data**).

Loss or theft of mobile phone

If the child loses his/her mobile phone, first of all, it is important to call the operator as soon as possible to block the SIM card in the phone. In this way, you can avoid high phone bills or the misuse of phone numbers and other personal data.

When the mobile phone is stolen, the child loses not only his/her property but also valuable data – contacts to friends and everything saved in the phone. Therefore, it is good to make a backup of these data, for example in the PC, and at the same time it is important not to save important data in the phone, such as passwords to accounts or a credit card PIN. It is also vital to report this incident to the police. The production number (IMEI – International Mobile Equipment Identity, a 15-digit international mobile equipment identification number) can also help in the search for the mobile phone. In order to get it *#06# needs to be pressed on the mobile phone.

Each phone has its unique number which can be used to block it. It is also good to leave a contact number in the phone to a person who can be called in the event that the child has lost the phone and the finder wishes to return it.

Undesired contact

Mobile phones are one of the means that are often misused for various forms of aggressive behaviour (insults, threats, cyberstalking, cyberbullying), for repeated contacting and sexual harassment. Children and teenagers are not only the victims but also the perpetrators of such treatment of other children and also of adults in authority, e.g. teachers. Anonymous calls, repeated ringing, aggressive, threatening or ridiculing SMS messages, posting of the victim's telephone number, sending offensive pictures or unsolicited photographs with sexual content are all relatively frequent actions among children. (You will find more also in the chapters **Cyberbullying** and **Sexuality on the Web**.)

**EXAMPLE (account of primary school teacher):**

“There was an occasion when the children wanted to get their revenge on me for something. They posted my mobile phone number on a website offering erotic services. It was impossible to find out where exactly they posted my number and men were calling constantly and would not be put off. My phone rang constantly in the middle of the night. In the end I had to change my number.”

Inappropriate content

Just as on the web, children can gain access not just to inappropriate content, especially violent content, eroticism and pornography, but also to paid content or services on the mobile phone. Slovak mobile operators undertook in the National Mobile Services Safe Use Code that they would offer child controls over access to adult content. In this way, parents can block access to certain content by means of a free SMS. Equally, just as with the Internet, when using mobile phones ordinary blocking of content only reduces the possibilities for the child but it will not suffice as the sole means of prevention or as a replacement for conversations with the child about the risks associated with the virtual environment.

Health risks

Despite a number of researches, the harmful effect of mobile phones has not yet been unambiguously confirmed. However, it cannot be wholly excluded, as it is gradually emerging that the use of mobile phones can affect brain activity. Children and teenagers could be more vulnerable to these effects because their brain and nervous system are still developing. Therefore, experts recommend that they confine the use of mobile phones to necessary calls only and that they keep the calls brief. Listening to loud music through earphones is another risk associated with the use of mobile phones, as it can damage the hearing. Road traffic injuries are the other major public health challenge. The young listen to music or are texting while cycling, skating or walking through the pedestrian crossing. They do not pay the attention to what is going on around them and can end up hit by a car. A good example of responsible behaviour from adults could be not using mobile phones whilst driving.

Violent videos, happy slapping

Mobile phones are often used to spread violent content – pictures and videos downloaded from the web. Happy slapping constitutes a separate category: this is when aggressors create violent videos themselves. A group selects a victim – either among classmates or from random passers-by. Then they provoke the victim to a fight, they humiliate, aggressively attack, sexually harass or rape the victim. They shoot the attack on the mobile phone and subsequently send the video to friends or post it on the web.



KNOWN CASES OF HAPPY SLAPPING FROM ABROAD:

United Kingdom, 2005. The police arrested three 14-year-old boys on suspicion of raping an 11-year-old girl. The management of the school was notified of this case when one of the staff found a video in the mobile phone belonging to one of the boys.

United Kingdom, 2005. 15-year old Chelsea O'Mahoney and her friends Reece Saergant (21 years), Darren Case (18 years) and David Blenman (17 years) were convicted of the manslaughter of David Morley. While the boys were kicking David to death, Chelsea made a video of their "fun" on her phone.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN WHEN USING MOBILE PHONES

SIM card produced for children

There are safe SIM cards already available on the market. With these cards parents don't have to be afraid of their child running up huge bills since access to audiotext numbers is blocked. The child will equally not be able to download topics with inappropriate content. You can stipulate a list of numbers which the child can call, monitor the child's consumption or localise the child in the event of danger.

Protection against mobile phone theft

Emphasise to your child that a mobile phone is expensive and that it represents a great temptation to thieves. The child must look after the phone, protect access to it by a PIN code and keep it concealed; it's best for the child to carry it on his/her person as no thief can get to it there. If the child leaves his/her mobile phone lying on the table or lends it to friends, he/she can lose it in a moment of inattention. But if someone tried to obtain the phone under pressure or violence, it is the child's priority to protect him/herself and not expose him/herself to unnecessary risk.

Etiquette of mobile communication

The use of mobile phones has its own rules of decent behaviour and the child should gradually learn them. It is discourteous for the child to suddenly start talking to someone on the phone or typing an SMS while having a personal conversation with someone. In situations where the ringing of a phone or a loud conversation could disturb or annoy others, it is appropriate to postpone the call until later or to turn the phone off (such situations are a variety of cultural and social events, but also when travelling in a bus).



Use of mobile phones at school

Regulations for the use of mobile phones at school are usually stipulated in the school rules; some schools allow the use of mobile phones during recesses, other schools require children to turn their phones off during classes. Nevertheless, it is important to agree on your concept beforehand. Your child should call you only when essential and you, in turn, should not check what the child is doing during each recess. The child needs to know that the mobile phone is not for playing with under the desk during lessons, cheating at tests or ridiculing classmates

Telephone communication between parents and the child

Mobile phones are useful as you can contact the child and check where he/she is at that moment or your child can call you when he/she needs something. However, the older the child, the more you should try to reduce these checks and the more you should trust him/her. If you have a teenager, agree that your child will call you if he/she is late, but do not require your child to report to you every hour. The mobile phone should be a means of communication, not for constant supervision.

Payments for mobile phones

Agree with your child how his/her phone bills are to be paid. The child can get a regular monthly account or have a pre-paid flat rate. He/she should gradually learn to be responsible and watchful with money when using the phone. If the child exceeds the

limit or uses up the account, he/she should learn that it is not to be taken for granted that somebody is going to pay for more credit. It is more effective if the child pays – from his/her pocket money, from money from a temporary job, or he/she can work off the bill by doing extra chores at home. In this way, the child will learn that the calls should be limited and that not every trifling matter has to be discussed via SMS. Warn your child that calling audiotext numbers, downloading ringtones or supporting a favourite in a TV competition by sending SMS messages can be expensive.

Respect for the child's privacy

If you check your child's mobile phone secretly behind his/her back, you can break the trust between you. You should accord your child the right to privacy. Something like the "letter secret" exists also for SMS messages, e-mails or numbers called. Warn your child that extreme situations may arise when you will have to look into his/ /her mobile phone, even despite your trust – for instance when something serious happens to your child and you have a suspicion that he/she has started a relationship with a sexual predator. (You will find more about grooming in the chapter on **Internet Acquaintances**.)

Protection of personal data

Lead your child towards the protection of personal data. Your child should think twice who he/she gives his/her number to, who he/she gives access to pictures and videos; he/she should not disclose the PIN code to anyone. Children often lend their mobile phones to each other, they read the SMS messages of others without permission or transmit pictures saved in the phone. They should reach an agreement with their friends that they will mutually respect their personal data and not provide them to anyone else without the consent of the person involved. (You will find more about the protection of personal data in the chapter on **Misuse of Personal Data**.)

Protection against harming

Talk to your child about the risks related to the use of mobile phones, ask what the phone is used for and whether your child knows what to do in cases of danger. Encourage your child to turn to you in the event of problems; do not threaten him/ her that you will ban the use of the mobile phone. It may happen that your child will not tell you about unpleasant experiences or will wait until these experiences reach a crisis level. It is important that children and teenagers know and understand that they don't have to put up with unpleasant messages or calls, and can terminate or ignore them. If someone sends messages, pictures or videos that are unpleasant to them, they should tell an adult. They can stand up to blackmailing, threatening or bullying via the mobile phone. If such behaviour continues, they should save the evidence, record the calls and report this to the police. In the worst case, they can change their telephone number. (You will find more about protection against cyberbullying in the chapter on **Cyberbullying**.)

Boundaries of fun

Children test a lot of things out, they are curious as to what happens if they cross the boundaries. They make calls to strangers and make fun of them. They ring their friends from an undisclosed number, they take pictures or videos of friends in compromising situations or call emergency lines. Talk to your child about the possible consequences of such behaviour – if he/she calls an emergency line groundlessly, someone else in a life-threatening situation might not be able to get through at the same moment. Explain to your child that he/she is responsible for the way he/she treats others – especially if he/

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **Look after your mobile phone:** especially if you are in a busy place. Don't leave your phone where anyone can see it, don't lend it to all sorts of people – the opportunity creates the thief. You can lose not only your phone, but also all the data saved in it.
- **Think twice about what you are going to spend your account on:** sending SMS messages to competitions or calling audiotext numbers can really make a hole in your pocket money.
- **Protect your personal data:** give your number, pictures or videos only to people you can really trust. If you're not careful, total strangers may call you. Someone can distribute your pictures and videos or post them on the web. But also treat your friends in such a way that they can trust you – do not send their data to others without their consent.
- **When using the mobile phone, keep others in mind:** don't annoy them with loud calls about your personal affairs and turn the ring tone off if it could bother others.
- **Don't take pictures and videos of your friends without their consent.** Pictures and videos that you consider funny might be embarrassing or humiliating for others.
- **You can also be hurtful with words in an SMS or in a picture transmitted.** Keep that in mind when you use a mobile phone.
- **Your mobile phone belongs to you:** you don't have to let anyone trawl through stuff saved in your phone, read your SMS messages or use it if you don't want it.
- **If someone hurts you via a mobile phone, stand up to this person!** Sometimes simply ignoring them is sufficient, but if the harassment continues or more serious attacks occur, tell an adult.
- **Do not make videos capturing violence and prevent further distribution of such videos.** Hurting the weaker is not funny in any form, it rather testifies to the cowardice of the person who doesn't dare stand up to an equal rival. Show that you are not to be influenced by others.

/she hurts someone. You can hurt someone with words in an SMS or a mocking picture. Sometimes children just don't realise sufficiently that what they regard as simply funny is humiliating for someone else. Talk to your child about what the other person goes through in such a situation. Targeted and repeated aggression towards others, or to someone weaker, is always harmful to the other party. Emphasise that such behaviour is unacceptable, and even punishable under the law.

GAMES

Name of the game: **Smilies** (grades 1 to 9 of primary school)

Procedure A: Draw several smilies and ask the children if they know their meaning. Assign the smilies to the emotions they depict. Gradually choose children who will one by one play the individual emotions and stand with their backs turned to the other children.

Procedure B: Draw Japanese smilies unfamiliar to us and let the children guess what they mean.

^.^ or ^_^ (smile, enthusiasm)

^_^; (embarrassing situation, the semicolon symbolises a falling tear)

m^_^m (cowering, hiding, it is often used as a cat which put its paws on the table, the "m" on the sides of the smiley generally means a hand, paw in a cute position)

^_~ or ^_- (wink) ^_^// (clapping)

^_^/ (waving, greeting)

-_- or -- (sick, sleepy, tired, disgusted)

T_T (crying, sad)

TT_TT (floods of tears, can be meant ironically)

Procedure C: Talk about how the way used to express or experience an emotion can change the content of the sentence. Let the children come up with sentences with a smiley at the end that will change its meaning. For instance: "You have really come up with something :-)" / "You have really come up with something :-(" . Then let the children try to express the emotional disposition in spoken language – by means of intonation, facial expression, etc. Discuss with them if it is easier to understand emotions from the spoken or the written language, what we are deprived of in written communication, what are the pros and cons of the one or other form of communication.

Name of the game: **Who's got a better mobile phone** (gr. 6-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Ask the children which mobile phone is better. With a button keypad or touch screen? Samsung or Nokia? Carry on, Nokia or iPhone? Which friend is better, the one who has a button keypad Nokia or touch screen iPhone? Ask the confused

children why they would rather be friends with someone who has an iPhone. Discuss with them how they choose their friends and whether it also happened to them that someone did not want to be friends with them just because they didn't have something, etc.

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The fairy-tales **Unknown Mobile Phone** and **Mobile Mania** deal with respecting a friend's privacy, the etiquette of mobile communication and mobile addiction.

The Other Side deals with social equality.

Snow Game deals with recording violent and humiliating scenes – happy slapping.

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The book **01 Za siedmimi wifinami a siedmimi statusmi** deals with the topic of mobile phones.

SOURCES:

<http://www.handywissen.at>

<http://www.klicksafe.de>

<http://www.handysektor.de>

http://www.getsafeonline.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1158

<http://www.saferinternet.org>

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ON THE WEB

Anorexia and bulimia, self-harm, suicide, violence, drugs, cults...

The Internet is the source of a wide variety of information – not just useful, reliable, and harmless information but also information that adults and especially parents would like to protect their children from. Children often come across inappropriate content by accident when surfing the web, after clicking on unknown links in an email, when entering the wrong web address. However, we should not underestimate the child's curiosity, the desire to discover what is unknown and prohibited or the attempt to shock others with something extreme.

Nudity and sexuality, violence, verbal aggression and profanities, the presentation of intolerance, extreme behaviour, abuse of addictive substances, use of weapons, as well as content which can provoke fear, anxiety, depression or the feeling of being threatened are regarded as inappropriate content for children.

TERMS

Pro ana/Pro mia blogs, websites: websites promoting anorexia or bulimia as a lifestyle, they present anorexia and bulimia in a positive light.



Drugs, medicines, steroids

Due to its anonymity and lack of control, the web is the ideal venue for promoting and dealing in drugs. You can find sites here promoting drug abuse, comments of users who describe their experiences with drugs, marijuana-growing manuals, handbooks for the production of synthetic drugs or tips for freely available substances that have similar effects. A clever user can find out where to buy the drug and under which encrypted names the dealers offer their goods.

Since 2010 we have witnessed a sharp increase in new psychoactive substances, of which a large group known as "Spice" is promoted and sold freely in special shops on the web, such as "Crazy Shops", "Smart Shops", "Head Shops", "Euphoria Shops". These websites often contain misleading advertisements stating that these are natural substances, or are only for use as bathing salts or gifts. These websites also contain disclaimers in the form of warnings against oral use which may cause damage to health. The truth is that the goods on sale, drugs, contain synthetic cannabinoids or cathinones. The best-known Internet drugs include "Salvia divinorum", "Kratom", synthetic cannabinoids from the "JWH-" group and "mephedrone".

Medicines, dietary supplements and anabolic steroids are also sold on the web. Medicines and dietary supplements are not necessarily harmful; however, when sold on the web, these preparations can have a questionable composition for an advantageous price or they can be prescription drugs that should not be used without

medical supervision. The sale of anabolic steroids is forbidden and the sale of these to adolescents incurs severe penalties under the law. Use of these substances can result in serious damage to health and even death.

However, many websites also deal with drug prevention, they point to the indicators of warning signs, describe the detrimental effects and consequences of drug abuse, they offer help for addicts and their relatives.

Racism, intolerance and discrimination on the web

Children and teenagers can come across hateful comments on people from different groups on the web, the promotion of racist and xenophobic opinions, the denial of the Holocaust. They themselves can become victims of racially-motivated attacks or encounter websites of extremist movements.

You can find more about racism on the web in the chapter on **Intolerance**.

Violence and violent videos, dangerous scenes

The web contains a great deal of violent content. You can find horror and violent scenes from movies, musical video clips with violent scenes, simulated violent scenes, pictures of victims of disasters, recordings of fights, pictures or videos depicting wars, torturing of animals, torture, executions, videos capturing brutal violence, rape or violence against animals. Pictures or videos that are not shown on TV or in the press due to regulation are distributed on the web without any restrictions; they are shown on sites for videos, rough photographs or in the personal profiles of individual users.

Sometimes children come across such pictures and videos by accident when surfing the web, but frequently they share them with other children, they forward links to the websites with videos and sometimes they themselves create such pictures and videos. They are impelled by the desire for sensations, curiosity, trying the forbidden fruit, but also by the impulse to shock others.

Younger or more sensitive children are usually not prepared for such content and they have difficulties coping with it. They don't understand what is going on, they may experience a feeling of fear and endangerment, they may have nightmares. As for older children, the decrease in sensitivity to similar impulses can be risky – violence might seem to them as something common, intended to entertain others.

Boys also tend to imitate violent and dangerous scenes in order to prove to others that they are courageous and manly. Only those who dare more than the others, who endure more fear or pain, can pass these tests of courage. Boys find much of their inspiration on the web, they make videos of their performances and post them to be appreciated by others. There is a thin line between extreme sporting performances and risking one's life; what began as fun can end in a serious injury. For instance, boys try jumping from high buildings, riding downhill on bicycles without braking, but also fights, cutting or burning themselves.

Cults, subcultures

The virtual environment is used by various groups for presentation and promotion of their ideas, for communication with members or recruitment of new ones. This possibility is also used by various subcultures or cults (religious, but also economic).

It is important for adolescents to belong somewhere, to integrate into a group and they can also find such a group on the web. Subcultures don't always have to be dangerous, but we can find such among them which promote harmful ideas in their extreme forms, such as violence against other groups of the population, drug abuse or self-harm (e.g. skinheads, EMO).

Cults are adept at taking advantage of the desire of people not to be alone, to belong somewhere. They chiefly address those who are vulnerable and solve their problems, either in relationships or finances. At the outset they offer friendship, acceptance, solutions, but later they require people to give up their own identity, to be obedient and to submit fully to the rules of the cult.

Promotion of anorexia and bulimia

Mental anorexia and bulimia are eating disorders. Although they do occur in boys, adolescent girls are those mostly affected. This is related, first of all, to powerful doubts about oneself and one's own value. Girls have a distorted view of themselves, they consistently regard themselves as imperfect. Late-stage eating disorders cause serious health complications; they can end in death without appropriate medical and psychological help.

The promotion of eating disorders on the web is a new phenomenon in this area. You can find websites and blogs under the names "pro ana" (promotion of anorexia) and "pro mia" (promotion of bulimia), which are created by young girls. They present eating disorders in a positive light – as a modern lifestyle, as a valuable part of life. Achieving a thin body is the recipe for happiness. Girls support each other in losing weight, they exchange tips on how to camouflage the signs of anorexia in front of others, they post pictures of their idols – extremely skinny girls and women.

The danger of such sites lies in the power of a group – girls have someone who encourages and supports them, they create pairs who watch over each other while losing weight.

Self-harm

Self-harm means causing harm to oneself. It often occurs during adolescence as a way young people adopt for coping with problems. Cutting oneself with a razor blade or other sharp instrument, burning, pricking and piercing body parts, scratching open wounds are the most common forms of self-harm. It tends to be linked to various styles, such as EMO or Gothic, but not all who adhere to such styles hurt themselves.

Self-harm is an expression of mental suffering through physical pain. Sometimes it is a plea for help, for someone to finally take notice that something is not in order. However, adolescents often conceal self-harm, they cut themselves in secret at home, they wear long sleeves so that no one notices their scars.

They say that self-harm is the only way in which they feel able to cope with tension and sadness, that the cutting and the pain experienced bring them momentary relief from unpleasant feelings. Thus, self-harm becomes a certain form of addiction.

Deep-rooted conflicts and problems with relatives and friends usually lie behind self-harm – a lack of love and acceptance, violence in the family, neglect resulting in feelings of inferiority, self-blame, doubts about oneself and one's value, feelings of loneliness and isolation. Acute crises, such as the divorce of parents, loss of a loved one, break-ups and disappointments in love, as well as bullying are frequently triggers for self-harm in adolescence.

Adolescents post personal blogs on the web where they promote self-harm; they discuss it on various forums and in chat-rooms. What is dangerous about these sites is that they present self-harm in a positive light and belittle its possible risks. These sites are not enough in themselves to convince just any teenager to start cutting him/herself; however, for vulnerable teenagers who are seeking solutions to their problems, the sites can furnish examples that they elect to try out. In particular, discussions about various self-harm methods, descriptions of experiences and personal stories and idealised pictures are all attractive for teenagers.

The power of the group established on the web is also dangerous – teenagers support each other in self-harm, they share advice and create a community where self-harm is accepted, which might make overcoming it more difficult.

EXAMPLE (Internet forum):

"I cut my arms and for me it's the only way to get rid of the feeling of loneliness and drowning in sadness for at least a minute; it helps me even though my arms already look terrible, it helps me and it's like a drug that I can't get rid of..."



Suicides and assisted suicides

Just as in the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it also holds true here that the information read by a child or teenager surfing the web is not sufficient in itself to make him/her attempt suicide. The causes and effects come in a different order – a teenager who is troubled about something difficult in his/her life thinks about death and also starts searching for suicide information on the web. The risk is that he/she might really find information about possible techniques for committing suicide.

Before someone reaches the decision to commit suicide, he/she thinks a lot about it and also sends out warning signals into the environment which act as coded calls for

help. He/she talks about the pointlessness of life, that he/she would love to commit suicide, this person considers the pros and cons, re-assesses his/her life and past. People close to the victims of suicide often say after their death that they should have paid more heed to these signals.

Children and teenagers send out these signals not only in the real world but also in chat-rooms and Internet forums. They write about their suffering and sadness, they want someone to take notice and listen to them. Sometimes a reaction, an encouragement on the web can help them, can confirm that someone at least cares about them. They can also find websites offering counselling or contacts to professional psychological help. On the other hand, there is also the risk that they come across someone who rejects them or who supports their intentions.

Some web-users perceive the virtual environment as something separated from reality, with numerous sensations and extreme, unusual experiences, where real people disappear – they are capable of watching, via a web-cam, a person dying without calling for help.



EXAMPLES:

United Kingdom, 2007. Kevin Neil Whitrick, shyboy_17_1 was a regular visitor to a chat-room. He also became the first person to commit suicide online – he hanged himself. The other visitors to the chat-room watched his suicide via a web-cam and some of them encouraged him. None of them called for help

Slovakia, 2010. 20-year-old Lucia had suffered from depression for a long time and attempted suicide. She found that she was not able to kill herself, as she was too afraid of failing. That is why she gladly accepted the proposal of Matej Č. who she met on the web. He offered to kill her in such a way that she wouldn't feel anything. They agreed on all the details and the exact date of their face-to-face meeting during their chat. Their last conversation took place on 1 September 2010. Lucia disappeared one day after meeting Matej Č. The police found her body on 15 May 2011.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ON THE WEB

Early prevention

Talk to your child about various threats before the child encounters them. Talk about drugs, the body cult, self-harm, suicides, cults, violence through the life stories of other people in free conversations. Discuss your opinions and attitudes, why these people behave like this and what consequences their behaviour may have. If your child gets to name these threats on his/her own, this is far more effective than listening to parents' instructions. The younger the child you advise on the threats on the web, the more he/she will listen to you and heed the lesson. Naturally, older children don't have to accept your advice and would rather listen to their peers.

Blocking

You can install blocking software for younger children. This software will prevent access to sites that are not suitable for children of this age or could frighten them. The software can block access to pornography, violent content, but also to other topics, such as drugs, intolerance or subcultures.

Inappropriate content can also be blocked on sites for posting videos, such as YouTube.com. Internet providers and mobile operators also offer blocking services or parental controls. The services control access to websites, compare the given addresses of websites with the categorised database of Internet addresses. From the outcome of the comparison, the service will either permit or block access to the site. Don't forget that any blocking mechanism has only a limited effect. Children connect to the web not only on their PCs at home, but also at school, at their friends' or on their mobile phone, and if they find something really interesting and tempting, they will find a way to gain access to it.

Strong relations

Strong and safe relations in the real world are the best protection against dangerous content. A child who has a secure background in the family knows that he/she can turn to his/her parents if he/she comes across something on the web that he/she doesn't understand or is frightening, he/she knows that he/she can turn to his/her parents when something worries him/her, he/she has problems or makes a mistake. In such cases, there is less of a risk that the child will make use of an unsuitable problem-solving strategy, such as self-harm, drug abuse or violence against others. The child is also better able to resist manipulation or pressure exerted in both the real and the virtual worlds.

Critical thinking

Teach your child that not everything he/she finds on the web is true, that not all people are motivated by good intentions, that not only nice and pleasant things are on the web. Your child will come across something accidentally, or out of curiosity, and you cannot create a world where your child would not come across such content. The child needs to learn how to assess such content, how to form his/her own opinion and choose what is useful for him/her. Don't punish him/her by forbidding access to the web; on the contrary, encourage your child to tell you about his/her experiences whatever they may be, and talk about them together.

Take interest in the child's life

Take note of what motivates your child in everyday life. Talk about his/her positive experiences and successes. Does your child have good friends? Is he/she successful at school? Does he/she have hobbies that make him/her happy? Or, by contrast, has your child been worrying about something for a long time, does he/she have doubts

about him/herself, feel lonely? Your child needs more attention and support especially when something serious happens in his/her life – for instance he/ she loses his/her best friend, is disappointed in love or experiences his/her parents' divorce.

Pay attention to your child's behaviour, habits, feelings and expressions, particularly when something changes unexpectedly. You might not notice the first symptoms of eating disorders, self-harm or experimenting with drugs, but later your child will encounter problems in camouflaging them. Pay heed also to the sites your child surfs on the web – this can be a first warning sign that something is going on.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **If you don't like something or something frightens you on a website, leave it immediately.** You can choose what you are going to look at.
- **You can always say no.** You can decide what you want to do based on your wishes and not based on what others say or do. Real friends will understand and will not force you to do something you don't want to.
- **You will not solve any problems by harming others or yourself.** You can find wise stuff and useful advice on the web, but also stuff that will hurt more than help (e.g. about cutting or drug abuse).
- **Don't believe everything you read somewhere.** You can find websites that say how important it is to be skinny and that anorexia is fantastic or, by contrast, that a real man must have enormous muscles. If someone likes you and really loves you, he/she doesn't care whether or not you are perfect.
- **You always have to pay for quick solutions.** Drugs promise marvellous experiences and a lot of fun, but you will pay for them with money, your health, addiction, a loss of friends and joy in life. It is easier not to start at all than to get free from an addiction later.
- **In difficult times, turn to an adult, a good friend or free helpline Pomoc.sk (116 111).** You will experience doubts, disappointment and suffering in your life. At first, your problem might seem insurmountable but, in reality, a solution can always be found.
- **You can also help your friend or someone else on the web, if he/she needs it.** Young people have a better overview of the Internet world and you might notice something that parents or other adults have overlooked.
- **You only have one life, but always several solutions!** Even though you have the impression that the situation you are in cannot be solved, there are always ways to cope with it. Sometimes you just have to wait a day or two, or turn for advice to someone and you will see that it is not as bad as it seemed at first sight.



Positive utilisation of the web regarding threats

You can find not only dangerous content on the web but also useful information and advice. You can learn more about the individual risks from trustworthy sources. You or your child can also confide in someone on the web with your concerns or worries. Sometimes it is easier to start to talk about something difficult in an anonymous setting where no one knows you. At difficult moments it may be pleasant to be encouraged, even by a stranger, and web advice might be the first step in solving your problems in reality. You can also turn to our professionals at the helpline Pomoc. sk (via e-mail, chat-room or phone at 116 111) who will answer your questions or arrange professional psychological help for you.

Look for help

Be pro-active if you have a suspicion that your child has an eating disorder, harms him/herself, abuses drugs or contemplates suicide. Even if you are not sure, don't wait to turn for advice to a professional. The earlier these problems start to be solved, the better the prognosis and, vice versa, if the problems are not solved, they can result in serious health damage or death of the child.

GAMES

Name of the game: **How old are you?** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Ask the children how many of them are on Facebook. Most of them will raise their hands. Continue with questions: "Which of you is older than 13?" No one raises his/her hand. "Do you know why I am asking?" Tell children about the age limit for Facebook access. "If you come across a website asking if you are 18 years old,

what will you do? Will you lie to get further?" Talk to children about why some things are enticing for them even though they are forbidden, why they respect such bans sometimes and sometimes they don't, why they think such age limits exist and what could happen if they ignore them. You can also ask them for their views on which ways to protect children are good and which ones don't work.

Name of the game: **Take note of what I say**
(grades 6-9 of primary and secondary school)

Procedure: Divide children into groups and each group has to write and tell how one of them experienced the day. They have to use sentences in the story that are a signal that something is not in order and the child contemplates harming him/herself or even committing suicide. For instance: "a life like this doesn't make sense", "it's not worth living", "my loving is good for nothing", "no one likes me", "I am useless", "I feel so lonely", "no one will miss me"... Children have to note down all "suspicious" signals and discuss why they noticed them.

SHEEPLIVE.EU



The fairy-tale **Beauty Crown** deals with anorexia, "beauty recipes" on the Internet.

Carnival Mask deals with imitation of media idols in dangerous scenes.

Fireworks deals with the risks involved in the production and use of explosives.

Hands Up deals with profanities and crude gestures.

Responsibly deals with appropriate web content.

SOURCES:

<http://www.klicksafe.de>

<http://www.jugendschutz.net>

<http://www.cybersmart.gov.au>

UNSOLICITED CONTENT

Spam, hoax, viruses, advertisements, pop-ups, targeting

In addition to important and useful information, a great deal of pointless ballast is also spread via the web and e-mails. Many advertisements and special offers arrive, as well as funny e-mails and warnings against various dangers, in addition to viruses and other malware. Blinking advertisement pop-ups appear when browsing websites. All this is a nuisance, it annoys us at work and we waste time in having our attention distracted by it. Moreover, there is always a danger of us falling for various scams or unwittingly installing a virus that will damage our PC.



TERMS

Adware: software which automatically displays, plays or downloads advertisements into the PC. Sometimes the ads are used to cover the costs of creation of the software.

Firewall: software or hardware which blocks entry for hackers or malware from the Internet to the PC. It also blocks the transfer of malware from the infected PC to other PCs.

Hoax: false and fraudulent message warning of non-existent dangers or promising easy money. For instance, lucky chain letters and false pleas for help are hoaxes.

Malware: malicious software, general term designating harmful software. These include, for instance, viruses, Trojan horses and spyware.

Pop-up: undesired pop-up windows carrying advertisements.

Spam: unsolicited message sent to multiple PCs, often of an advertising nature.

Spyware: software concealed in the PC without the owner's knowledge. It collects information about the computer, surfing habits, passwords, e-mail addresses and other personal data.

Targeting: targeted Internet advertisement based on the user's characteristics (e.g. age, domicile, sites browsed).

Spam

The term spam designates unsolicited mail sent to PCs en masse. It is distributed mainly via e-mails, but also through SMS and MMS messages on the mobile phone, in chat-rooms or online discussions. Advertisements, special shopping deals, offers for participation in competitions and lotteries, as well as offers of erotic telephone lines and porn sites, miraculous medicines and medical treatments, illegal software and so on constitute a major portion of spam.

Spammers can find your e-mail address by random generation, searching on sites where you have posted it, from e-mails sent en masse or e-mail discussion groups. People enter their e-mail address on the web themselves when they order services through the Internet or when they log in to various websites. This way they often give consent to advertisements being sent to their e-mail address.

For companies, sending advertisements via e-mail is a cheap and efficient way of communicating with their customers. Not all react to spam the same way – some welcome notifications of the latest services, products and special deals, even in this form. But for others, such mails are a nuisance – they just fill up their e-mail box and waste their time when they have to sort e-mails.

Currently, the amount of spam is reducing – the providers of e-mail services have filters integrated into their servers which identify mails that could be spam. Antispam protection also usually forms part of e-mail software. The disadvantage is that, occasionally, harmless e-mails from unknown addresses are rejected as unsolicited mails.

How to protect yourself against spam:

Personal and contact data protection

Protect your e-mail address and mobile phone number, give careful thought to where you intend to post them. Create two e-mail addresses – one for your family and friends and one that you provide when logging in to various websites. Do not give your name in the address. If you get a lot of spam, simply stop using this e-mail address and create a new one.

Camouflaging the e-mail address

If you provide your e-mail address on the web, write “at” instead of the symbol “@” (name (at) gmail.com). This way, automatic search programmes will not be able to find your email address so easily.

Computer protection

Use anti-virus software and update it regularly. It will capture spam that could contain harmful software.

Reporting spam

Providers of e-mail services and software enable the marking of unsolicited mails and messages as spam. The sender’s address is thus classified as unwanted and mails and messages from this address are blocked. If you get such mail, don’t forget to report it as spam.

Protection against being sent advertisements

When filling out online forms, read the conditions carefully. They usually contain a consent to using your personal data for sending information about new products. You can ask the provider or company to stop sending you advertisements via e-mail or mobile phone, at any subsequent time. E-mails usually contain a link at the end that

you can click in order to remove your address from the list of recipients. In addition, you can contact the senders using their address; if you get SMS advertisements contact your operator. If no options for cancelling the sending of advertisements are listed, try to find information about the sender on the web or in the telephone directory and request the sender to stop sending you ads by phone, or by letter.

HOAX

The term hoax designates fraudulent mails or messages which warn of non-existent dangers or which promise to make you rich quickly. These include false or non-valid pleas for help, lucky chain letters and various petitions. Such mails have been circulating the web for years – they are steadily translated into different languages and, even though they are sometimes totally ludicrous, there are still people who believe them and send them on to others. This is the main difference between a hoax and spam – a hoax is mostly sent by gullible users who think that it is an important message, want to help or to earn money easily (you will find more about offers of easy profit in the chapter on **Internet Fraud**).

A hoax emphasises the imminence of danger and describes the threats dramatically. The author tries to create the illusion of trustworthiness, uses fabricated statements of known personalities, experts, companies or invented experiences of relatives and friends (e.g. “Microsoft warns” or “a friend told me about her experience”). The plea to immediately send the hoax to all relatives and friends acts as a further indicator.



EXAMPLES OF HOAXES:

Fabricated please for help:

Please send this mail to others! It's urgent!
Fire fighters have established an account for this one-and-a-half-year-old girl who suffered burns during the fire. Look at the picture. Her parents will get 1 euro for every e-mail sent; the money will be used for plastic surgery.
Share the mail even if you have received it previously.
Thank you.

Warning against invented dangers:

My colleague just told me about her experience. I have to share it.
She bought an orchid in IKEA, she watered it from the top and the orchid started to whistle (it emitted a strange sound). When this happened again after the second watering, she called IKEA and she was told to close the doors and windows, to leave the apartment and wait for them... A few minutes later a commando team wearing special protective suits arrived and put the flower pot in a special box. Then they explained that if an orchid whistles, it means that a tarantula has its nest among the flower's roots!!!!



HARM CAUSED BY A HOAX:

- **Annoying recipients:** hoaxes fill the e-mail box needlessly and waste one's time in reading and deleting them.
- **Dangerous advice:** some hoaxes give dangerous advice, such as how to get rid of an alleged virus in the PC by deleting a file. The user can damage his/her PC this way.
- **Excessive burdening of links and servers.**
- **Loss of the sender's credibility:** subsequently, no one believes mails from the sender. If the hoaxes are sent from the work address, the sender can also damage the reputation of his/her employer.
- **Disclosure of confidential information:** if the user sends a hoax to many other addresses, he/she usually leaves the addresses of all the recipients in the mail-header. Thus, a huge list of e-mail contacts gets to strangers and there is a risk that the list will be misused for sending spam or viruses.
- **Damaging a company's or institution's name:** some hoaxes warn of harmful effects of specific products (e.g. poisonous shampoos, deodorants causing cancer, aggressive effects of non-alcoholic beverages).
- **Uncritical acceptance and further distribution of information:** information from hoaxes is often accepted as true, without further verification.
- **Psychological manipulation:** hoaxes affect people by direct and indirect messages, they provoke a sense of threat (e.g. warning of hypodermic syringes in cinema seats) and guilt (e.g. a request for a financial contribution for surgery for a child suffering from cancer).
- **Strengthening superstition:** people believe that events and changes in their lives are not the result of their own conduct and efforts but depend on coincidences, luck and other uncontrollable external influences (lucky chain letters).

How to protect yourself against hoaxes:

Stop them spreading

Do not send chain e-mails. Such e-mails annoy most people, they occupy them needlessly and clutter their e-mail box unnecessarily. Ask your relatives and friends also not to send you such e-mails.

Think critically

Stick to common sense. There is a rule you can apply – if the e-mail contains a request to send the message to all the addresses in your list, it is most probably a hoax. Consider every e-mail critically – if it sounds too good to be true, it is surely a hoax.



Verify the veracity of the information

Check whether the information is true or a hoax. If you get a suspicious mail, prior to sending it on to others, check whether a similar mail is mentioned in a hoax database (e.g. www.hoax.cz).

Educate

If you get a hoax, write to the sender and explain to him what he has sent you and why it is bad. You can substantiate your contentions with a reference to a hoax database.

MALWARE VIRUSES, SPYWARE, ADVERTISEMENTS

Malware is another category of unsolicited content. Malware (“malicious software”) includes computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, adware, etc. Malware usually gets into the PC via the web, especially when browsing sites with low protection (most frequently sites for illegal downloading or erotic websites), as an attachment to e-mails and when installing software.

Computer viruses, worms and Trojan horses are software which attacks the system files of the computer's operating system, deletes files or directories, changes the content of files or damages the hardware. This software is able to transmit itself via the computer network even without the knowledge of the computer owner, and thus it is spread to other users.

Spyware is software which installs itself in the computer and, without the knowledge of its owner, makes an overview of the owner's activities, records his/her personal and contact data. This information is then sent to the creator of the spyware. He/ she can use it for sending targeted ads (targeting) but also for hacking.

Rules for advertisements are set less stringently in the virtual environment, so companies use various strategies to attract customers. The term adware (advertising-supported software) designates software, an advertisement application which somehow disrupts the user's activities on the web or renders them unpleasant. Ordinary banners, icons on sites, but also pop-ups consistently appearing (especially on porn, music sites and sites for downloading ring tones), or a change of the home-page in the web browser without the user's consent are examples of adware. Advertisements in free software sometimes serve to cover the costs of creation of the software, sometimes companies "rent" part of the screen where advertisement windows appear.

How to protect yourself against malware:

Make backups

Make regular backups of your data in order not to lose them if your PC is attacked by a virus.

Protect your PC

Use a firewall and update your anti-virus software regularly. Install protection against spyware and adware.

Exercise care in choosing websites

Do not visit unsecured sites such as porn sites or sites for illegal downloading.

Avoid dangerous attachments

Do not open unknown attachments to e-mails. Immediately delete all suspicious emails, e-mails from unknown senders or in a foreign language.

Be informed

Before installing any software or its parts in your PC, check what it is for (e.g. find information via a web browser). Read carefully what you agree to when you confirm the licence agreement on installation. Even software that looks useful at first sight can in reality be adware or spyware.

Block advertisements

Block pop-ups with ads in your Internet browser.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **Protect your computer.** Install protection against viruses and spam and update it regularly. Save anything important somewhere else also, just to be sure.
- **Don't open suspicious e-mails**, which arrived from a totally unknown address, possibly even in a foreign language. Such e-mails can be spam or can contain viruses. You should delete them quickly.
- **Do not send every e-mail that you get**, think about others. Ask your friends who wants to receive lucky chain letters, funny e-mails and presentations and who doesn't.
- **Your life is in your hands:** a lucky chain letter will not change it for better or worse, you are the only one who can do it! Nothing will happen if you don't send such an e-mail to others and delete it immediately.
- **Use common sense and don't believe everything** mentioned in e-mails or on the web. Whatever is too perfect or too dramatic is always suspect. No one will ever give you anything for free, you will not win a prize in an invented lottery. You will not die after drinking cola or eating a yoghurt, venomous spiders will not attack you, flour will not help your burns. People who send such e-mails just want to have either fun or profit.

GAMES

Name of the game: **Lucky chain letters** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Seat children in a circle. Say a message aloud to the first child, which will "bring" him/her luck or misfortune. Always start with: "If you don't pass this message on" and continue as you wish: "you will get an F in maths". If the child believes the message a little bit and is frightened, he/she will send the message unchanged. Otherwise the child can figure out his/her own message and pass it on. Elaborate with the children on the situations when they sent the message, when they were afraid and, conversely, why they didn't send the message and why.



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The fairy-tale **Ninety Nine** deals with lucky chain letters.

SOURCES:

<http://www.hoax.cz>
<http://www.spamy.cz>
<http://www.e-bezpeci.cz>
<http://www.saferinternet.at>
<http://www.wikipedia.org>

MISUSE OF PERSONAL DATA

Misuse of personal data, contact data, property information, pictures and videos, phishing

The main risk associated with providing any personal data on the web is that the data will, whether directly or indirectly, fall into the hands of someone who may use or misuse them. If you post personal data on the web, you make them freely available and lose all control over them. The risks involved range from mild risks – e.g. sending unsolicited advertisements after you provide your e-mail address, to serious threats, such as thefts, blackmail and bullying.



TERMS

Personal data: pursuant to the Act on the Protection of Personal Data, those data are considered to be personal which render it possible to precisely identify a specific person. Under certain conditions, detailed information could jeopardise or disadvantage the person in question. In addition to contact information, personal data also include so-called sensitive information, i.e. data which reveal the race, ethnicity, political views, religion or ideology, membership of organisations, political parties, health condition or sexual orientation. Under the Act on the Protection of Personal Data, every person has the right to make his/her own decision as to how he/she will use his/her personal data and where and to whom to make them available. Notwithstanding this, every person also enjoys the right to have his/her personal data protected from misuse by all means possible.

Phishing (from *password fishing*) means an activity where the fraudster seeks to entice users into divulging passwords, e.g. bank account password.



DATA THAT CAN BE MISUSED:

- **Personal data:** name, address, telephone number, school, workplace, age, birth certificate number, gender, health condition information, affiliation to religious group, sexual orientation, e-mail address, access passwords to e-mail box, internet profiles.
- **Bank data:** account number, password, credit card information.
- **Pictures and videos:** especially those which display you in unpleasant or embarrassing situations, pictures and videos showing you in underwear or with naked body parts, totally naked, in erotic poses, also pictures which provide information about your lifestyle, the way you spend free time (e.g. holiday pictures).
- **Information about socio-economic conditions:** information about where and how you live, your level of income (in the case of children, the parents' income), what you own (electronics, transport means, real estate), your hobbies and interests.

How these data get to the “unwanted” addressees:

- by e-mails, SMS messages, posting in chat-rooms and Internet forums, entering on websites
- by posting in profiles, social networks, sites for posting pictures and videos.

Your data can also get to unauthorised parties via a “second-hand” route, e.g. your friend posts your picture, your child boasts about the properties you own on the web.

How your data can be misused and the risks of providing data:

Contact data: If you make your e-mail address or mobile phone number available, you must reckon on anyone being able to contact you. A variety of firms and companies make use of targeting to address you on the basis of your age, interests and consumer behaviour. In addition to sending various mails with advertisements and SPAM, it may happen that you are contacted via e-mail, phone call or SMS message by someone whose contact you would wish to exclude; this person can repeatedly harass, or even stalk you.

Personal information: Any personal information posted (e.g. information about your ethnicity or nationality, your health condition, your intimate life) could form the basis for taunting, threats or be the instrument for blackmail in the hands of an unscrupulous person. With additional information that you post on the web (comments in discussions, membership of Internet groups, pictures from events) you also create a certain image of yourself which can affect the opinion of your acquaintances or a potential employer.

“Hacking” into a profile, misuse of profile, e-mail box: If you make your login name and password available (or if you choose an easily guessed password), someone can “hack” into your profile or e-mail box and subsequently act on your behalf – e.g. send e-mails, communicate in a chat-room, etc.

Thefts: Information about socio-economic conditions can act as a helpful guide for thieves who identify a suitable victim in this way. If you post the date of your holiday, or pictures from your holidays, or your daily habits, they can easily discover when you are not at home. A clever thief will find it easy to pretend to be your child’s friend and to gradually elicit this information from him/her. Phishing is also theft of data. Fraudsters search for bank data – account number, password, credit card information – via the Internet in order to gain access to your money.

Misuse of pictures: Either you yourself post pictures on the web (in profiles, on social networks, sites for posting pictures), someone else posts your pictures or you send them without protection in e-mails. Even if you make your photoalbums only available to your friends or you protect them with a password, it is still possible to circumvent these protection methods – so that anyone can get at your pictures. Hence, pictures

revealing your private life can get into the hands of anyone, not just people you know but also total strangers. Pictures displaying you in unpleasant or embarrassing situations (e.g. under the influence of alcohol), pictures showing you in your underwear or with naked body parts, totally naked, in erotic poses, can get into the wrong hands (e.g. your parents, colleagues, children) and they can be used for blackmailing or ridiculing you.

Pictures can be misused to create a false profile or a photomontage – e.g. a face can be attached to a naked body. Pictures displaying your wealth and lifestyle can, in turn, be used as a source of information for thieves and fraudsters.

EXAMPLE:

It happens that boys and men use intimate pictures of their ex-girlfriends, who dumped them, as vehicles for revenge – they send them to everyone they know, post them on erotic sites, etc.



Blackmailing, revenge, bullying: Do not underestimate how any of the above ways to misuse personal data can lead to blackmail, revenge or bullying. If you post your e-mail address or telephone number, someone can ring you repeatedly, intimidate you with threats, attack with aggressive mails or SMS messages. Your phone number might be published in various ads, e.g. in the offer of erotic services. Hacking into a profile and acting on your behalf is a frequent act of revenge. Information about your family and the property owned can become the basis for blackmail or bullying, in the same way as a picture (also see the chapter on **Cyberbullying**).

EXAMPLE:

USA, 2008. 18-year old Jesse Logan committed suicide after her ex-boyfriend sent her nude pictures to the entire school. She could not bear being exposed to the taunting and profanities of her classmates. She could not walk along the corridor at school without her classmates shouting “whore” and “porn queen” at her.



Sexual harassment, abuse: Even though anyone can become a victim of sexual harassment (or possibly even sexual abuse) on the web, children represent a group that is particularly at risk. Age, gender and pictures posted in web profiles are sensitive data in this case. The more personal data you post, the more space you create for the predator – by attracting his/her attention and by giving him/her the chance to get into contact.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST MISUSE OF PERSONAL DATA

Choice of nick (nickname)

When creating a profile, access to a website or new e-mail account, choose a nick that makes it impossible to identify you. This can be a risk, especially for children, if they choose a nickname referring to their age or gender (teengirl, dollface06, missy1997, sexychick99, etc.).

Choice and use of password

Choose a complex password for any service on the web. The ideal password should have at least 7 characters and it should consist of a combination of letters, digits and symbols, upper- and lower-case letters. Do not use common combinations, such as first names, common number combinations, date of birth, names of cities, states, rivers, profanities, words known on the web. If you get the impression that someone has gained knowledge of your password, you should change it. Experts also recommend that passwords should be changed regularly as a precaution. If at all possible, do not write your password down and never use a single password for all websites and services. Never disclose your passwords to anyone else, not even to friends or persons in positions of authority.

A safety or control question is often used if you forget your password. However, in the era of Facebook and social engineering, it is naïve to imagine that no one will discover the answers to questions like: “In which city was your mother born?”, “On what street did you live when you were eight?” Therefore, we recommend that you give fictitious answers to these questions.

Contact data

You yourself should decide who you want to entrust with your contact data. Give your e-mail address or mobile phone number only to those people you trust and ask them also not to pass on this information without your consent. You can use several different e-mail addresses – for private purposes, for your job, for various web portals and services. In commonly used software it is possible for e-mail administrators to block e-mails from selected users, if these users annoy or harass you.

Disclosure of personal data

Before you post any personal data on the web, think twice whether you want other people – whether friends and relatives or strangers – to know them. Think carefully to what extent you want to protect your privacy, consider the possible risks. Even though questions about personal information usually form part of various profiles, you don't have to answer them. Never send your personal and bank data by e-mail, chat or SMS message.

Posting pictures and videos

Never post on the web or send by MMS any pictures or videos showing you in a bathing costume, underwear, with naked body parts or in erotic poses. Do not post pictures or videos recording you in embarrassing situations.

Even if you protect your photoalbums or videoalbums with a password or you set access as “private” or “for friends”, do not rely on this being absolutely safe. Passwords can be found on the web and albums can be hacked. Your relationships can change also, and your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend may use your picture as an instrument for blackmail, ridicule, vilification or revenge. Thus, private pictures or videos can get onto freely accessible sites and what happens to them then is beyond your control. Sometimes it can be a complicated process to remove pictures and videos already posted. Post any pictures in a low resolution (max. 200x200 pixels); this will make their misuse more difficult.



HOW TO PROCEED IF YOUR PERSONAL DATA OR PICTURES HAVE BEEN MISUSED:

- First of all create a backup, proof of misuse of your personal data – save SMS messages, e-mails, create and save a photo of your screenshot, depicting the website with your personal data or pictures, etc.
- If you know who posted these data, pictures or videos on the web, resort to this person directly and request him/her to remove these data as soon as possible.
- If you're not successful, turn to the owner of the website (you can usually find the owner in the contact section or as the webmaster) and request him/her to remove your data from the site. If the sites are private and personal, you can approach the provider of the web space who can block the site.
- If you don't achieve success in this way, you can report the matter to the Slovak Police Force, lodge a complaint with the Office for Personal Data Protection (www.dataprotection.gov.sk) or with the national Stopline.sk centre which processes reports on illegal web content and submits them to the competent authorities.

Securing the web

If you use a wireless connection at home, check that your connection is secure and that encryption is activated. If you connect to the web in a public place, you should not send any important and sensitive information and disconnect yourself from the web if you no longer need to use it. You can thus avoid the risk that someone will access your data.

Facebook

Safety settings and the protection of personal data on Facebook are complicated. The settings are scattered across the entire website and the rules are changed frequently. We recommend that you start by looking at your profile through the eyes of strangers or a specific friend and begin to change the individual settings accordingly. You can discover how others view your profile if you click the cogwheel on the “Activity log” and select “View as...” from the menu. Then you choose in the top bar whether you want to view your profile as “Public” or as a specific person.

PHISHING

A phisher usually creates a website that resembles an exact copy of an existing trusted site. If you enter your data (name, passwords, credit card number, etc.), they are transmitted to the phisher who can then misuse them. The phisher may contact you, e.g. by e-mail as a member of the customer team and tell you that an error occurred on the site of their bank and you need to quickly provide your login name and passwords in order to save your account from being deleted.

How to protect yourself against phishing

- Serious institutions (banks, etc.) never ask for data from you by e-mail or SMS message (e.g. “We have registered suspicious movements in your account. In order to resolve the doubts, please click on this link and provide your data.”). If you have any doubts, go to the relevant institution direct or by phone and check whether they really sent the mail or SMS.
- In addition to the request to provide data, phishers also create an impression of imminent threat and pressure of time – your account will be deleted unless you provide the necessary data **immediately**.
- A phishing site almost resembles the original website of an institution, but there is always some difference. Check, for instance, the precise name of the web address. If you log in to similar sites, always enter their address in the browser; do not click on references in e-mails – these can direct you to a false website.
- Use secure sites for Internet banking or online shopping (more secure sites use SSL encrypting – “https”). Increase your security when doing similar transactions to the maximum possible extent – in addition to the password, make use also of e.g. SMS notification and similar.
- Never visit these websites on public computers, e.g. in an Internet café or in a library, and never set the PC to remember the login and password for these services. Always delete the web browser history before quitting the PC.
- Keep a watch on movements in your bank account and contact your bank whenever you detect even the slightest suspicious movement. This might be a phisher’s first attempt to test your vigilance.

- Use anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your PC as well as a firewall and update the software regularly. Set the highest protection level on your web browser.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS



- **You yourself are responsible for your data and their protection.** Think about the image of yourself that you create in the virtual environment.
- **Be careful when posting personal and sensitive information, and also embarrassing pictures and videos.** You may reveal more about yourself than you actually want to and thus land yourself in unpleasant situations, even serious trouble. Contemplate how much about yourself you would like others to know, because once you post something on the web, it will be there forever. Such information, pictures and videos (in underwear, naked or at a wild party) can get to your teachers, parents, your girlfriend's parents, or maybe sometime in the future to your employer or to your children.
- **Carefully consider what data you are going to provide in your profile:** your address, telephone number or ICQ have no business to be in the hands of unauthorised persons. The more data you post about yourself, the greater the risk that a stranger will contact you, someone who will annoy or harass you or someone who will seek to do you harm. You can provide these data to your relatives and friends in person.
- **Protect your e-mail address:** this way you avoid receiving various pestering mails and unwanted ads, but also possible harassment and bullying. Choose a nick and e-mail address for communication in chat-rooms, forums, blogs and Internet discussions which do not enable strangers to discover more detailed information about you.
- **Set the highest possible level of privacy protection in your profile in chat-rooms and social networks:** allow access only to those people you know and consider as your friends. In addition, always give careful thought as to which of your online friends can be regarded as real friends – do you really know them well enough and can you trust them not to misuse your personal data and pictures? All in all, be careful in your communications in the virtual environment. You can never know who is at the other end; therefore, be careful what you disclose and to whom. It's best to communicate with people that you know from real life.
- **Take care of the protection of your personal data, pictures and videos, but also mind the rights of others.** Agree with your friends that they will not disclose any information concerning you without your consent. You should not disclose their information without their consent either (e.g. don't give your friend's mobile phone number to a boy interested in her without asking her in advance). Don't read your friends' personal SMS messages or e-mails without their consent and don't enter their profiles either.



GAMES

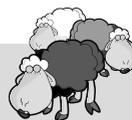
Name of the game: **Police!** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Simulate communication on the web, ask children questions and they should answer. The only rule is that, as soon as you start a communication directed towards acquiring their personal data, they must shout: "Police!" Example of ordinary questions: "Is the sun shining on you?", "Which subject do you like most at school?" etc. Example of suspicious questions: "Where do you keep your money?", "When are your parents out of the house?", "When are you going on vacation?", "Do you have an alarm system at home?" Alternate the ordinary questions with suspicious ones. Teach the children to think about the meaning of the questions.

Name of the game: **I am Facebook, I know everything about you**
(secondary school)

Procedure: Divide the class into several groups of students. Choose a profile of one student in each group who the children have on Facebook. Their role is to have a look at his/her profile and to try to find out as much as possible. The children then inform others what they have found out without giving away the names and other personal data and the others have to guess who is the student in question.

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The fairy-tale **Don't Dance with the Wolf** deals with misuse of pictures and videos.

Speaking Trumpet deals with the disclosure of information on property owned – phishing.

Burping Man deals with the Internet always remembering the mistakes you made in the past.

Harassment deals with sexting, sexual harassment on the web.

Photoalbum deals with profile pictures and one's reputation on the web.

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The book **01 Za siedmimi wifinami a siedmimi statusmi** deals with the topic of Facebook.

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SEXUALITY ON THE WEB

Sexting, posting erotic content, sexual harassment, sexual offers, pornography, cybersex

As children move into adolescence, relationships and sexuality become highly attractive topics for them. They are interested in everything, they test out what they find attractive and what the opposite sex finds interesting. The Internet, with all its possibilities for communication and anonymity, is an ideal space for flirting, making friends, experimenting with various roles and discovering one's sexuality. However, it is also the place where children can encounter erotic content which is not appropriate for their age, or they themselves can cross the borders of acceptable behaviour. They can also encounter sexual harassment.



TERMS

Sexting: sexually-oriented communication in the virtual world, including activities such as flirting on the web, sexual comments in chat-rooms, erotic SMS, MMS messages, sending erotic material via the web and mobile phone (pictures and videos).

Sexual harassment on the web: unwanted and unpleasant behaviour of a sexual nature, for instance sexual comments, offers of sex, sending erotic pictures and videos.

Cybersex: sexual activities via the web, from sexual chatting (describing one's behaviour and experiences) to mutual watching of auto-erotic acts via the web-cam.

Pornography: direct depiction of sexual poses and activities with the aim of sexual arousal and gratification.

Paedophilia: long-term, unvarying erotic interest in juvenile boys or girls (not every paedophile has to abuse children, and not everyone who abuses a child is a paedophile).

Facts about sexuality and sexual harassment on the web

Research carried out by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in collaboration with the civic association eSlovensko, o.z. in 2010 revealed that 37.0% of girls and 22.0% of boys have experience of sexual innuendoes and comments on the web. 36.4% of girls and 14.9% of boys were persuaded by someone on the web to send their picture or video, and 25.9% of girls and 16.3% of boys stated that they were sexually harassed on the web.

Children and teenagers can contribute to these risks with their behaviour on the web. They sometimes provoke and test the boundaries; they are testing how people at



the other end will react. It is not the same if the girl chooses the nick Cathy123 or Pussycat123 and adds pictures in erotic poses. What is also important is the further information and statuses that children include in their profiles, what they talk about in chat-rooms and with whom. As teenagers themselves admit, 11.1% of girls and 7.8% of boys have posted their pictures in sexy poses on the web, 3.1% of girls and 6.4% of boys even in underwear or with naked body parts, 9.9% of girls and 22.7% of boys have talked about sex on chats.

EXAMPLE (account of girl):



"I started using the web when I was 11-12-years old. I started writing in those chat-rooms and I wrote some really stupid things, I am so ashamed of what I wrote there, but I started chatting with these men..."

Sexting

Sexting is a form of flirting, playing with one's sexuality in the virtual environment. Young people exchange erotic SMS messages, they talk about sex in chats, they transmit their erotic pictures or videos, they undress in front of a web-cam, they try out cybersex. Usually they are trying to attract someone and start a relationship with him/her or to enliven the relationship they are in (e.g. girls often send their intimate pictures as a present for their boyfriend).



EXAMPLE (account of boys):

"We wrote to girls on Chat Roulette. Once one of the girls told us to undress, and we told her to undress first, and she did. Then we cancelled the chat."

However, children and teenagers often don't realise the risks of such behaviour. Someone might disclose their pictures, videos or personal conversation on the web, or pass them on to others. Boys boast about their sexy girlfriend, girls about the confessions of love they receive. Then, following an argument or break-up, this material is used for revenge, blackmailing, cyberbullying. Disclosure of the erotic pictures or videos causes embarrassment to the victim and damages his/her reputation. In some cases, sexting may also be viewed as the distribution of child pornography, corruption of morals or abetting the production of pornography.



EXAMPLE:

Florida, USA, 2009. Everything started when the girlfriend of 18-year old Phillip sent him a few of her erotic pictures. Following an argument, he was angry and sent them to his friends and her family. However, his girlfriend was only 16. As a consequence, under American law, Phillip received a suspended sentence of 5 years for the distribution of child pornography and he was placed on the list of sex offenders.

Posting erotic content

Posting any pictures or videos on the web or on the mobile phone can be dangerous, especially when they get into the hands of the wrong people. This particularly applies to pictures in bathing costumes, underwear, with naked body parts or in erotic poses. Even if such pictures or videos are password-protected, it is possible to gain access to them. People disclose entire lists of passwords to albums on the web and there is software that can detect the correct combination. Then anyone can access the content of the albums anywhere, the owner of the albums loses his/her overview and all control over the place where his/her pictures and videos end up. They can be used for blackmailing, revenge, bullying or posting on porn sites.

Sexual harassment and sexual offers on the web

Sexual harassment on the web takes various forms – vulgar and direct contributions to chats, comments on pictures and videos, proposals to indulge in various sexual activities, sending erotic pictures and also offers of sex for money. In the main, girls regard sexual harassment on the web as something common, that everyone writing in chat-rooms encounters, that you cannot do anything about other than to ignore it.



EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE WEB (accounts of children):

"Many people, especially men, propose perverse acts to me."

"I don't like it when a total stranger writes to me and talks about perverse things."

"All girls experience it. It's quite common in chats. Offers on the web for 50 euro or to send a picture."

"Or other offers come too. Like come on holiday with me for three days and you will get 2000 euro and you will have fun."

"Someone wrote to me to give him my Skype nick, that he would drop hot wax on his penis in front of me."

Children and young people are tempted by an offer of quick and easy money; however, they don't realise what this is really about. If someone sends his/her erotic pictures or videos, performs autoerotic acts via a web-cam for money (even for a mobile phone top-up or money in various virtual worlds), we are talking about so-called cyberprostitution. Paid assignments or roles in porn movies are also agreed through the Internet. If the children and teenagers are younger than 18, it becomes a question of child pornography or child prostitution.

Predators can lure young girls or boys to various modelling jobs or temporary jobs abroad via the web; however, these jobs turn out to be erotic pictures or peopletrafficking (enforced prostitution). Another tactic is to pretend to be a known celebrity and to lure the victim to a meeting or to acquire compromising pictures and videos.

Paedophile forums on the web (Boy and Girl Lover Forums)

These forums are venues for paedophiles to meet. They exchange experiences, air their sexual fantasies, recommend sites where interesting pictures of children can be found (e.g. photoalbums from family holidays, where children are in swimming costumes or pictures of children in erotic poses). They also seek to play down paedophilia, they defend it as a form of sexual orientation and contend that sexual experiences can be pleasant games for children. These activities, as such, do not contravene the law; the users are careful not to cross this line in a freely accessible environment. However, these forums act as places where paedophiles get into contact, spread child pornography, where the older and more experienced users advise on how to avoid discovery and on how to realise one's fantasies.

You can find more about **grooming** (building relations with a child in order to sexually abuse him/her) in the chapter on **Internet Acquaintances**.

Pornography on the web

Younger children often happen upon porn sites by accident. They click pop-up windows or a link in an e-mail, they make an error when typing the www address.

Even a seemingly innocent name can be a camouflage for a porn site. Experience with pornography on the web can come as a shock to young children. Due to their age, they are not yet prepared for becoming acquainted with sexuality in such a form, they don't understand what is going on; subsequently they can experience fear, disgust, even aversion to sex.



EXAMPLE (accounts of boys):

“Sure, all boys watch it. I don’t believe people who say that they have never ever seen porn.”

“Boys frequently talk about porn at school. You know, about those pages for people aged eighteen plus.”

All that has changed is that nowadays pornography is more readily accessible thanks to the Internet. Hard-core porn, in particular, is dangerous for the development of juvenile sexuality, as it depicts violent, humiliating or pathological sexual practices (zoophilia, paedophilia). Experience with such pornography at a tender age can affect the attitudes to sexuality and relationships that are just forming.

To date, it is not possible to clearly define what may be the consequences of free access to such a quantity of pornography. Researchers warn that men can have higher expectations of their partner and a reduced level of response to common sexual stimuli. In turn, women can experience increased doubt about their appearance and their abilities in bed. Excessive viewing of pornography can lead to preferring virtual sexual experiences over real life in a partnership, or may even lead to addiction.

Child pornography

Child pornography is a type of pornography which depicts children as sexual actors or sexual objects (if the age of the child cannot be determined, anyone who looks like a child is considered to be one). Any misuse of children for the production of pornographic material is punishable by law, just as is the distribution or ownership of such material.

If you encounter child pornography on the web, you can report it anonymously on Stopline.sk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST SEXUAL CONTENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE WEB

Filter the content

If you have younger children, you can make use of the secure connection to the web which is offered by Internet providers and mobile operators, or use filtering software.

This will block access to sites carrying content which is inappropriate for children. However, no filter is totally reliable, some sites can gain access anyhow and it may be that the filter also blocks access to sites with useful and beneficial information on the given topic. A filter is not an effective instrument where older children are concerned, as they are able to circumvent such restrictions.

Select games

Nudity, sex, even sexual violence can occur in some computer games. The producers are obliged to mark every game with the relevant symbol and age limit. If you buy computer games, study the symbols in the PEGI system – pegi.info (Pan European Game Information) together with your child in advance and choose a suitable game.

Boost self-confidence and develop critical thinking

Treat your child as a unique and exceptional being, respect his/her feelings and views. Show your child that you appreciate him/her just the way he/she is. This way the child will perceive him/herself as a valued being and will not be so dependent on appreciation and acceptance by others. A child that does not have so many doubts about him/herself is better able to resist peer pressure, makes his/her own decisions, is able to assess what is right and what is wrong. Such a child is better able to defend him/herself and also to reject whatever appears unpleasant to him/ her.

Agree rules

Talk to your child about the risks and consequences of sexting, posting intimate pictures and videos on the web, or of watching pornography. Try to be open and non-judgmental of his/her views and attitudes, take an interest in what your child thinks. Agree on rules that you are going to stick to (e.g. use of child chat-rooms, communication only with relatives and friends, no posting of pictures). The child will undertake to observe the restrictions and you will undertake to trust your child and respect his/her privacy. Gradually, adjust the rules according to the child's age.

Clearly say no

On the web, it is much easier for children to be alone in communication with an adult, without the support of friends or protection of parents. If the perpetrator is persistent and adept at persuading children, or if the children perceive the predator as an authority, then they will ultimately give in and do something that they regard as bizarre or unpleasant. In this way the predators manage to elicit naked pictures from children or convince them to display various sexual practices via the web-cam. Explain to children that any such requests are wholly out of order. It is important that they clearly say no right at the outset, report the harassment to the administrator of the website or tell you about it. If it is difficult for them to clearly say no, at least teach them that they can end any conversation on the web at any time.

Sex and sexuality

Do not underestimate this topic, but don't overestimate it either. Don't make sex and sexuality a taboo, they are a part of life and partner relations. The child is interested in this topic and wants to know more – provide answers appropriate to the child's age. Take an interest in the opinions of your child and his/her relations towards the opposite sex. If you avoid this topic, the child will learn that it is something he/she cannot talk about with you – not even if he/she experiences something unpleasant or someone hurts him/her.

Do not punish your child for something that is natural. Accept that increased interest in sexuality, discovering pornography, masturbation, gaining a first sexual experience are all parts of sexual development, especially when children enter into adolescence. However, be wary if something transgresses the limits. Cybersex or watching pornography can be a part of becoming acquainted with sexuality or of reviving a partner relationship, but it can also become an addiction, an escape from problems or real relations – not just for adolescents but also for adults.

Report illegal activities

On the web, it is easier to infringe the law and more difficult to see that the law is observed. Perpetrators feel protected by the anonymity of the virtual space, they often do not fully realise that what is punishable by law in real life is punishable everywhere. An adult who convinces a child to send intimate pictures, perform cybersex via a web-cam, or who sends his/her naked pictures or performs sexual activities him/herself, is guilty of a crime. Carefully save all evidence and report such cases to the Slovak Police Force. You can also report any misuse of children on the web (child pornography, sexual exploitation, child prostitution, childtrafficking, grooming) anonymously on Stopleveline.sk. The staff of the centre will assess all cases reported to them and refer them to the police or to partner organisations abroad.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

- You can happen on something on the web that you don't understand, is unpleasant or even repulsive. **However, you can always choose what you watch on the web and mwho you communicate with.** If someone sends you mails, pictures or videos that you don't like, you can block the user or report him/her to the administrator of the site. Then mexit the site or ask an adult how to block such sites. If you need to have something explained or if you are worried by something that you have seen, do not hesitate to talk about it with an adult.
- Flirting or indulging in sexual activities on the web may appear to you to be interesting, tempting, exciting. But you can never know who is at the other end. **Do you really know who it is you are undressing for and sending your pictures to?**



- **Do not expect that everything that you post on the web or send via a mobile phone will remain private.** Passwords for albums can be found on the web. Your boyfriend or girlfriend may boast about the great mail, SMS or MMS he/she got. After a break-up, erotic pictures or videos can be wonderful vehicles for revenge.
- **Respect the privacy of others.** Sensitive mails, pictures and videos that someone sent to you don't belong to others. If you want to boast about something, first ask the person who sent you such content whether he/she will mind.
- There is no such thing as "I've changed my mind" on the web. **What you send, post or do once remains online forever;** anyone could have it copied or sent to others. Right into the future, people can learn what you did in the past.
- **Do only what satisfies you.** Peer pressure is often the reason why, for instance, girls post their sexy pictures. Don't let yourself be forced into doing something you don't want to do, not even if your friends, boy/girlfriend or someone on the web persuades you. Everyone has to bear the consequences on their own.
- **Think about how the recipient will feel.** A mail or picture that you consider funny may be anything but funny for others. Even talks about sex and naked pictures may seem embarrassing, unpleasant, disgusting or perverted to the person you are communicating with. It's perfectly possible that you'll achieve quite the opposite of what you wanted to achieve.
- You can discover what is forbidden on the web, you will surely also happen upon porn sites. **What you see in a porn movie is acting, not real life.** And don't forget that it can be too much of a good and a bad thing – you can become addicted to watching porn.
- **How to detect a false profile.** A false profile usually doesn't have a long history; the profile picture is attractive, even provocative. There are only a few pictures in photoalbums, and even these look like the work of a professional photographer – no blurred or spoilt pictures.

GAMES

Name of the game: **Why aren't you talking to me?** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Stand in front of the main entrance to the school in disguise, so that the children don't recognise you. They will walk past and not say a word. Enter the classroom in the disguise and take it off. Ask the children why they didn't talk to you as they walked past you. The children will say that they didn't recognise you, they considered you to be a stranger. Ask them if they would talk to a stranger if he/she addressed them on the web. "And if I address you as a stranger on the web, will you talk to me?" Discuss with the children when they would communicate with you on the web and when not, and talk about the differences between finding friends on the web and face to face.

Name of the game: **Why do people give presents?** (grades 1-9 of primary school)

Procedure: Simulate communication on the web. "If you want me to send you Justin Bieber's latest hit, raise your hand." Some children will raise their hand, others won't. Pretend that you are sending the song to all the children that wanted the song and ask if they will tell their parents. "If you want me to top up your mobile phone, raise your hand." Of course, all the children will raise their hand and you pretend to top up the mobile phones of all the children. The next question: "Will you tell your parents that I topped up your mobile phone?" You continue: "If you want a new iPhone, raise your hand." Again, all the children raise their hands. You pretend to give a new mobile phone to everyone. "Are you happy to have an expensive mobile phone?" "What else would you like me to buy you?" End the game by asking: "Why did I send you an MP3 file, topped up your mobile phone and bought an expensive iPhone?" Open the discussion with the children, ask them why they willingly accepted all the presents, why they kept it a secret from their parents and, conversely, what was your reason for giving them the presents.

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The fairy-tales **Don't Dance with the Wolf** and **Coatless** deal with the misuse of pictures and videos.

Secret Friend deals with making contacts for the purpose of sexual abuse – grooming.

Harassment deals with sexting, sexual harassment on the web.

Photoalbum deals with profile pictures and reputation on the web.

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ADDICTIONS

Internet, PC, PC games, social networks addictions

Activities on the PC or on the Internet can be pleasant sources of amusement and relaxation. Everybody needs some healthy relaxation in their lives to distract them from their work and school duties. However, the condition becomes dangerous when the time spent on these activities exceeds a reasonable amount and becomes the dominant focus of one's life. One person succumbs to online computer games, another can't resist chatting. The activity becomes a drug, the "addict" always needs another dose; hence, spending an excessive amount of time on these activities comes within the category of so-called non-substance addictions.

Internet addiction is not an addiction to the Internet as such, but to activities made possible by being online. We will use the term "Internet addiction" for various types of addiction to render the whole matter simpler and more comprehensible.

TERMS



Netholism: expert term for Internet addiction (derived from the words "net" and "-holism" such as in alcoholism, workoholism).

MMORPG (Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game): online computer game where the player acts as a fictitious character in a complex virtual world. The game enables thousands of players from all around the world to join in and interact.

Facts about time spent on web activities

Research carried out by the Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology in Bratislava in collaboration with the civic association eSlovensko, o.z. in 2010 showed that online activities are one of the commonest ways of spending their free time for children and teenagers. The research examined how many teenagers spend several hours a day on the individual activities. Teenagers like to chat (44%), perform activities on social networks (43%), watch videos (24%), play games (20%), search for and download files, music, films (19%) or surf the web (13%).

These data complete the picture of which addictions represent the greatest risk for children and teenagers. Computer game addiction is a risk which already concerns younger children, more boys than girls. Girls are more at risk of becoming addicted to chatting and social networks. As soon as boys enter adolescence, the risk of addiction to pornography grows.

Nowadays, people can be online anytime and anywhere, which creates an even greater possibility for addictions. Most children have an Internet connection directly at home, we can find the Internet at schools, there are hotspots in cities allowing Wi-Fi connection, mobile operators offer Internet connection via mobile phones.

Hence, children can check whether they have received new e-mails or statuses, surf on the web or play online games even during classes.



EXAMPLE (account of primary school teacher):

“Luckily, I understand modern technologies quite well, so I can find out what children do on mobile phones. Even during classes. Recently, I caught a few boys red-handed as they downloaded and watched porn movies.”

Children and teenagers are often totally unaware that their activities have stopped being ordinary fun and have become an addiction; they are unable to assess objectively how much time they spend on these activities. That is why it is important to note the initial signals, the excessive amount of time spent on web activities, which may indicate an incipient addiction (e.g. frequent and compulsive checking of one’s Facebook profile). It is better to intervene at the outset, because an addiction has developed it represents a serious problem which is difficult to resolve as it requires professional help.



EXAMPLE:

Wellington, USA, 2007 16-year old Daniel Petric bought the game Halo 3 even though his father forbade him to do so as he did not agree to his son playing violent PC games. It was some time before the parents found out, by which time he was already playing up to 18 hours a day. When his father discovered this, he immediately took possession of the game and locked it in his safe. A month later, Daniel managed to break into the safe. He took the game and also a pistol, then he walked into his parents’ bedroom and said: “Close your eyes, I’ve got a surprise for you!” He shot his mother dead; his father survived despite serious injuries.

TYPES OF ADDICTION

Computer and computer games addiction

A computer game can grip the player with its realistic depiction of its world, the possibility to control the course of the game and to be a hero in a thrilling story. Players experience excitement and tension, a rush of adrenaline, the sensation of success and power. Massive online games, so-called MMORPG, where the player shares the space with hundreds and thousands of other players, and thus creates a game that is available non-stop, are a significant current phenomenon. Addictions emerge most frequently when playing these games. They don’t have an end, there is always something new to achieve, to improve, there are always new adventures to experience. The power of the group is another factor – all have the same objective, the participation of everyone is important and the player feels a responsibility to join in.

It is often the parents who help the child to get to the first game. If the game was bought in order to occupy the child's free time, when the parents cannot spend time with the child, there is a major risk that the child will spend a lot of time playing PC games. And then parents can often receive this answer when they call they call their child to dinner: "But, mum, I'm finishing level 60 right now and I'm going to be able to buy new armour!"

You can find out more about computer games in the chapter on **Games and Gambling**.

Addiction to cyber relationships

Excessive involvement in online relationships via chat services, social networks, profiles, communicators

A person addicted to relationships in the virtual world spends a lot of time posting every single detail from his/her life, enhancing his/her profile, adding new pictures, viewing friends' profiles and commenting. Such a person checks the Internet every other moment, can hardly wait to see when someone posts something new, how others assess his/her profile and pictures. He/she searches for new friends through social networks (the number of his/her friends on social networks totals hundreds to thousands), builds virtual relationships. These online friendships seem to be better than relationships in real life (relationships with friends and family in the case of children, relationship with a partner or spouse in the case of adults), he/she has the impression that people on the web understand him/her better. If something worries this person, he/ she is angry or sad and looks for support and help in chat-rooms or on social networks. He/she gets nervous if no one responds for a long time or if none of his/her friends are online. He/she can fall in love with somebody met on the web, and build a relationship even though they never meet in reality.

The disinhibition effect also plays a role in addictions to cyber-relationships – people on the web talk more honestly and openly about themselves even after only a brief acquaintance with the other person, which creates an illusion of closeness and trust.

You can find more about building relationships on the web in the chapter on **Internet Acquaintances**.

Information overload

Addiction to surfing on websites and browsing on the web

The huge amount of information on the web contributes to compulsive behaviour. A person addicted to web searches spends a lot of time browsing various websites and databases, downloading data from the Internet, sorting the information found. There is always something on the web that he/she hasn't yet seen, read or tried out.

Internet compulsiveness

Addiction to online shopping, trading, gambling

A person with Internet compulsiveness obsessively looks for the best online shopping deals, joins in online auctions or online gambling.

Constant digressions to browse the web or continuous searching for the best deals considerably reduce the concentration on other activities (studying or work) and also the performance. It's also possible to lose a lot of money if suffering from Internet compulsiveness.

Children tend to browse video sites, such as YouTube.

Addiction to web pornography

Arousal and sensations of pleasure during masturbation play a role in the addiction to web pornography. The addict constantly needs new, more interesting and more extreme stimuli in a large quantity; he/she surfs websites and downloads videos not previously seen.

You can find more about Internet pornography in the chapter on **Sexuality on the Web**.

Further addictions include: shopaholism – shopping, tanorexia – visiting tanning salons, orthorexia – obsession with a healthy diet, bigorexia – bodybuilding, body cult, etc.

CHARACTERISTIC OF ADDICTIONS

All Internet addictions have one feature in common, which is sensations of pleasure achieved quickly and easily. During these activities, so-called happy hormones (endorphin, dopamine) are created in the human body and they induce feelings similar to those induced by alcohol and drugs. The experience and behaviour of an addict are also similar.

Addictions to new technologies exhibit similar symptoms to other types of addiction:

- **Importance:** the PC or web activity becomes the most important in life. It affects the behaviour and thinking, occupies the attention of the addict. Even when the addict is not indulging in this activity, he/she is at least thinking about it, planning it and looking forward to it.
- **Mood swings:** if the addict doesn't get to do the activity in question, his/her mood changes, he/she reacts in an irritated fashion, is nervous and lacks concentration. The addict's reactions are exaggerated especially if someone disturbs him/her in the activity or criticises him/her for the addictive behaviour.
- **Increased tolerance:** the addict needs to spend more and more time in the activity in order to obtain pleasure. He/she is not able to stop at the time planned, he/she always finds something that needs to be done (finish another level in a game) or watched (further videos or sites).



- **Withdrawal symptoms:** unpleasant feelings occur after discontinuing the activity, or if the addict cannot perform the activity for an extended period of time. He/she yearns for the activity just as a drug addict yearns for another dose of the drug. The addict reacts with irritation if no PC is available or if in a place where there is no Internet connection or mobile phone signal.
- **Conflicts with the surroundings:** the addict gets into conflicts with his/her surroundings because he/she neglects relatives, school, work or other interests; he/she fails to keep appointments previously agreed.
- **Relapse:** even if the addict tries to avoid, quit or at least restrict the addiction, he/she often succumbs to it once again. If a relapse occurs, the addict tends to be drawn in faster and deeper.
- **Mixed emotions:** on the one hand, the addict experiences feelings of pleasure and relief when he/she can spend time doing the web activity; on the other hand, he/she feels like a failure when he/she repeatedly does not manage to overcome the addiction. The addict also suffers from a sense of shame and guilt, pangs of conscience because of the time spent on the web or because of the activities themselves (e.g. addiction to Internet pornography).

REASONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ADDICTIONS

First of all, it is important to understand why a person has become an addict if a solution is to be found. The addiction itself is the consequence of some other problem – that is why some become addicts and others don't. A child often compensates for

some other need with the addiction, for instance lack of attention from parents or the absence of friendships in real life. Some personality traits of the child (such as greater anxiety and bashfulness) and the quality of the child's relationships also contribute to the development of addictions.

Children inhabit a world where others – parents, teachers, tutors – tell them what to do and how to do it. They get into situations which they cannot influence (such as their parents' divorce or relocation). In the virtual world they suddenly feel that they are in control of their world which they can adapt to their needs, that they can be a powerful hero.

Reasons which can contribute to the development of an addiction include:

- boredom;
- failure in real life, problems at school;
- parents' model of spending free time and solving problems;
- lack of interest on the part of parents; minimal time spent together;
- lack of friendships;
- conflicts in the family;
- low self-esteem;
- mental problems (depression, social phobia, anxiety disorders),
- need to vent frustration and accumulated anger (violence in the family, bullying).

Internet addictions are especially dangerous for children – the younger they are, the greater the risk. Childhood and adolescence are sensitive development periods when children need to acquire the manifold skills and abilities necessary to become successful adults.

- Childhood is the period when daily habits and regimes are created (dividing time between duties and fun). Children learn how to occupy their leisure time. It is more difficult to replace an addiction if the child did not have any habits developed beforehand to which he/she could return.
- School years are also the period when peer relations are built. Children learn to function within a group, they adopt new communication and social skills. If they withdraw into isolation and function only in their virtual world, they will feel the lack of these skills later on.
- Coping with stress and difficulties is another important skill. If children create a behaviour pattern where they reach for quick solutions whenever they experience unpleasant feelings (they replace the unpleasant feeling with a pleasant one), or they escape from stress to a place where they don't have to think about it, this increases the risk that the Internet addiction will later grow into another type of

addiction – nicotine, alcohol or drug addiction. There is also the risk that children will subsequently avoid solving problems rather than facing them.

- Addiction creates a vicious circle – children become isolated due to the addiction, they have poorly developed social and communication skills, few relationships or they escape to the virtual world because they feel lonely in the real world. They feel more pleasure and security in the virtual world – the addiction increases the isolation and the isolation increases the addiction.
- Habits necessary for a healthy lifestyle are also created in childhood. An irregular regime and lack of physical activities on the part of children who are addicted to computers and the web result in concomitant health problems, such as obesity, sleep disorders, backache, headache, eye-strain or carpal tunnel syndrome (wrist pain caused by a regular one-sided loading such as working with a mouse). Weaning from and treatment of Internet addiction

WEANING FROM AND TREATMENT OF INTERNET ADDICTIONS

Similar approaches are applied as in the treatment of other types of addiction: abstinence, i.e. not using technologies, a strict regime, creation of new habits; also group support and sharing with people with similar experiences. A change of environment is important; if nothing changes, if support relations and the involvement of relatives and friends are lacking, there is a high risk of relapse.



WHAT TO TAKE NOTE OF

Carefully watch for the symptoms of your child's addiction at the outset, before the addiction develops. Your child might play down the situation at first. Later your child will try to hide his/her activities – he/she will say that he/she is working on a school project on the PC, but actually spends time chatting or on social networks. At night your child will wait until you fall asleep, then get up and play on the PC. He/she will make a false absence note for the teacher in order to be able to stay at home and continue his/her activities.

Your child might be at risk of developing an Internet addiction or addicted if he/she:

- spends most of his/her free time at the PC or playing games;
- is no longer interested in other activities that he/she liked previously;
- loses track of time spent on the web;
- checks e-mails, SMS messages and statuses on social networks several times a day;
- often exceeds the limit for using the PC or the web;
- displays irritation if you forbid him/her to use the web;
- talks only about what he/she experiences on the web or in a game;
- has difficulties distinguishing between the real and the virtual worlds;
- makes new friends with people from the Internet;

- repeatedly asks for money to buy better PC hardware, software or games;
- prefers to spend time with activities on the web than with the family or friends;
- lies about how much time he/she spends on the web and what he/she does there; he/she reacts with irritation to questions of this type;
- uses the web as an escape from problems or depressive mood;
- doesn't sleep at night in order to spend more time on the web, then falls asleep at school;
- risks the loss of friends, worsened performance at school and passes up opportunities just to be on the web;
- often eats at the computer;
- if not on the web, thinks only about how to get back on the web again;
- displays withdrawal symptoms, such as anxiety, restlessness, trembling hands when he/ she cannot be on the web;
- has dramatically worse results in school, is secretly playing truant to stay at home and spend time on the Internet;
- stops taking care of him/herself, neglects personal hygiene, forgets to eat regularly due to web activities.

Your child might be addicted to web pornography if he/she:

- is jumpy and quickly closes open windows on the screen or switches the PC off whenever you enter the room;
- deletes browsing history;
- spends a lot of time on the PC, especially at night;
- the Recent Documents list (e.g. in the Start menu in Windows) is either deleted or shows files that can no longer be found on the hard disk (they were moved or hidden). The names of these documents can contain terms related to sex.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD AGAINST INTERNET ADDICTION

Have an overview of the child's activities

Locate the computer or games console in a common room, not the children's bedroom. Thus, you will have a better overview of your child's activities and time spent on them. Take an interest in what your child is doing on the web, try out some activities together. Play some games that are addictive in order to better understand why they are so tempting for children.

Set rules

Talk to your child about web addictions and explain the risks. Set rules for PC and web use (e.g. only after your child completes his/her homework). Agree together

on the time which your child is allowed to spend at the PC or on the web. Even if your child doesn't always stick to these rules, it is better when he/she knows what is expected of him/her.

Set parental control

It might be difficult for the child to abide by time limits, especially if your child is already a web addict. You may agree that you will set up a system of parental control (e.g. in the Windows Operating System or by using blocking software) where you can set the time schedule precisely. The PC or web browser will automatically turn off at the given time. Using blocking software you can also prevent access to chat services, social networks, pornography or online games.

Choose games

Choose games that are appropriate for your child. Producers are required to mark every game with the relevant symbol and age constraint. If you are buying computer games, study the symbols in the PEGI system – pegi.info (Pan European Game Information) together with your child in advance and choose a suitable game.

Recognise the warning signs of addiction

Take note of symptoms which indicate that something is going on with your child or that web activities are becoming too important for him/her. Discuss web addictions with your child, talk about what you have noticed, show him/her that you are concerned, but without judging, moralising and expressing anger. Tell your child where such an addiction can lead and that you want to prevent something like that happening to him/her.

Be a role model

Children learn how to behave largely by observing and imitating adults – “educational speeches” have little effect. There is no big difference between spending free time at the PC or on the web and in front of the TV. Children also learn from parents how to solve problems or how to ease tension – for instance by escaping or using addictive substances, such as cigarettes or alcohol. If children see that their parents apply these “quick solutions”, they too can be more inclined to escape into the virtual world or to succumb to addiction.

Find ways to spend free time

Look for substitute activities your child can do in addition to activities on the PC or the web, spend time together. Boredom, loneliness, lack of interest on the part of parents are frequently the reasons for web addiction. If your child is already addicted, it won't help just to send him/her outside to play, but without you again. Involve your

child's friends and teach them to spend time together in another way – take them for a trip, a week camping in the wilderness, play floorball with them outside or one of the modern party games at home.

Addiction to web pornography

If you discover that your teenager watches porn on the web, you don't have to be concerned immediately. Curiosity and interest in everything related to sex constitute part of adolescence and masturbation is a natural part of sexual life. However, be wary if watching porn on the web becomes an everyday activity for your child, an escape from unpleasant feelings or the only way to relax.

Help, support and collaboration with experts

If you suspect your child of having any addiction whatsoever, don't hesitate. The situation might only become worse. Involve people close to your child, relatives and friends. If the addiction has already developed, you will probably need the help of an expert. Professionals working at the Pomoc.sk (116 111) helpline can provide you with counselling and contacts to a psychologist or non-substance addiction treatment centre.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

- **Time goes fast on the web**, you really don't realise how much time you spend there. Try keeping a close watch on what you do on the web and how long you spend there over the course of a day – you could well be surprised.
- **Draw up a contract with your parents on use of the PC and web.** In the contract, specify when you can play on the PC and also the rights and duties that you will observe. Just a contract like this can help you have more control over time spent online.
- **Think about all the unpleasant things** that can happen if you spend too much time at the PC, on the web or playing games. Think also about what you could be doing in the time you spend on the web. Put everything down on a poster and hang it next to your PC.
- **It's too much of a good or a bad thing.** Computer games or chatting might be fun and a pleasant way of relaxing after school, but make sure also that you find time for meetings with friends or doing sports.
- **Other people might be better placed to see what doesn't catch your attention.** If your parents or friends are endlessly asking you what you do all the time on the web, it generally makes you furious. Try thinking about why they are asking – the truth tends to be unpleasant.
- **It is not easy to overcome addiction, you will probably need the help of somebody else.** It takes a lot of courage to admit to addictions, both to yourself and to others. Turn to an adult you can trust – a parent, friend or expert on Pomoc.sk (116 111).



GAMES

Name of the game: **Come out!** (grades 1-5 of primary school)

Procedure: Choose one child who will pretend to be sitting at a PC. The role of the other children will be to entice the child away from the PC. The child in front of the screen has to give reasons why he/she doesn't want to accept the individual offers and quit the PC. Discuss with the children why they like the PC so much, and when they prefer their PC over their friends and why.

Name of the game: **How many friends have you got on Facebook?**
(grades 6-9

of primary school)

Procedure: Get the children to put their hand up if they have more than 50 friends on Facebook, then more than 100, 200, 300 until only the winner remains. Ask this child to name all of his/her FB friends. If the child comes to the 25th friend and can't remember the names of others, bring the game to an end by asking: "What kinds of friends are they if you don't even know their names?" Then discuss with the children who they add as friends and why.

SHEELIVE.EU

The fairy-tale **Muddy Heads** deals with PC games addiction.

A Thousand Friends deals with virtual friendships



SHEELIVE.EU

The book **01 Za siedmimi wifinami a siedmimi statusmi** deals with the topic of mobile addiction.



SOURCES:

<http://www.saferinternet.org>
http://www.safesurfingkids.com/warning_signs.htm
<http://www.video-game-addiction.org/>
http://www.varianty.cz/download/pdf/texts_160.pdf
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7746471.stm>
<http://www.netaddiction.com/>
http://www.helpguide.org/mental/internet_cybersex_addiction.htm
<http://www.helpforinternetaddictions.com/>
<http://www.wikipedia.org>

WHERE TO FIND HELP

ZODPOVEDNE.SK

The project (Slovak Awareness Centre SSIC) was established in 2007 with the aim of fostering safe and responsible use of the Internet, mobile phones and new technologies. Within these areas it focuses on increasing awareness, spreading information and crime-prevention in the world of children and teenagers. It is the only project in Slovakia to be supported by the European Union under the Safer Internet Programme. The main activities of the project include:

- regular surveys and research in this area;
- preparation and commenting on strategic Government documents and legislation;
- training for children, teenagers (CHIPS, Junior Ambassador), teachers, parents and other people responsible for children and young people;
- issuance of methodological books and publications;
- production of the educational animated TV series Sheeplive.eu and its distribution in Slovakia and abroad;
- organisation of national Zodpovedne.sk competition;
- in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, extension of formal education and curricula on the issue of safer Internet;
- coordination of organisations and institutions in the area of informal education;
- production of educational videos for young people;
- preparation of international Safer Internet Day in Slovakia;
- preparation of educational SMS campaigns;
- organisation of child committees throughout Slovakia;
- representation of Slovakia in international organisations: INSAFE, INHOPE, EU KIDS ONLINE;
- production and distribution of educational and promotional materials in Europe and worldwide (online and in hard copy);
- administration of websites: Zodpovedne.sk, Pomoc.sk, Stopleveline.sk, OVCE.sk (Sheeplive.eu), Facebook sites and other activities.

If you are interested and would like to join in the activities of the Zodpovedne.sk project, contact us by e-mail at: miroslav.drobny@eslovensko.sk.

POMOC.SK

The Pomoc.sk (helpline) project provides specialised counselling on problems brought about by new technologies – the web, mobile phones, etc. It is part of the Unicef Child Helpline which since 1996 has been helping children around the clock, 365 days a year. Children can call with any problem, topic or just the need to share their feelings with someone. Problems in the family, at school, with friends or teachers, but also addictions, physical and mental abuse or suicides, all these can be discussed on this helpline.

The project devotes increased attention to:

- aggressive, violent and disrespectful behaviour;
- misuse of personal data;
- relationships and communications on social networks;
- inappropriate content on the web and in PC games.

The project is intended for parents and teachers who need professional advice regarding the upbringing and education of their children or pupils, but anyone who cares about children can call the helpline.

In order to ensure the most extensive availability, you may contact us FREE OF CHARGE in three ways:

- non-stop by phone on the Unicef Child Helpline 116 111;
- by online chat on www.pomoc.sk daily from 16.00 to 22.00;
- by sending an e-mail to: potrebujem@pomoc.sk (Ineed@help.sk).

The Unicef Child Helpline is anonymous, the calls are not recorded and the telephone numbers are not registered, thereby creating a safe environment for children to express their feelings. A child feels safer in anonymity, there is a bigger chance that the child will also be able to confide sensitive topics, such as the loss of a relative or friend, failure at school, unwanted pregnancy, rape, sexual abuse, forced prostitution, physical abuse, bullying, suicidal tendencies, etc. It is easier for the child to talk about situations that are unpleasant for him/her, that he/she is afraid or ashamed of.

Help for lost children. The helpline pays special attention to children who have run away from home, are lost, abandoned and kidnapped, were kidnapped by one of their parents and are unaccompanied minors. Children who have left their homes for whatever reason, whether of their own free will or by force, can seek advice or specific help on this helpline. The helpline also provides counselling and information to insecure parents, it affords them the chance to review their procedures and attitudes if their children don't return home. It increases the chances of finding lost children and it helps them avoid ill-considered decisions. The public can also provide information on lost children on the helpline. The telephone number for help for lost children is 116 111. Online counselling can be accessed daily from 17.00 to 21.00.

STOPLINE.SK

The objective of the National Centre for Reporting Illegal Content or Conduct on the Web, Stopleveline.sk, is to combat:

- child abuse (child pornography, sexual exploitation, child prostitution, child trafficking, grooming...);
- racism and xenophobia;
- other content or conduct which is indicative of a criminal offence.

The main pillars of Stopline.sk are:

- **Accessability:** Reporting illegal content, for instance child pornography, is a delicate issue for the general public, so non-governmental organisations are favoured over law-enforcement bodies.
- **Impartiality:** The advantage of a non-governmental organisation is that it is easier to combine forces, irrespective of the specialisation of institutions and organisations in the public sector and the competitive environment in the private sector.
- **Anonymity:** In general, members of the public are prepared to report illegal content provided they are guaranteed anonymity. Stopline.sk guarantees that it will deal with the reported content regardless of the anonymity of the person reporting it and that it will not record their IP addresses or e-mail addresses.
- **Efficiency:** Stopline.sk functions as an effective filter for the Slovak Police Force. Only those cases where illegal content or conduct is suspected are referred to the Police Force. The Centre helps avoid the submission of duplicated reports within Slovakia, but also within the INHOPE network.
- **International network:** Reports relating to content beyond the territory of Slovakia are sent to partner organisations working in the international INHOPE network. Conversely, if a citizen of another country reports suspicious content in Slovakia, Stopline.sk will deal with this problem.
- **Professionalism:** Stopline.sk is staffed by people of integrity, they have the appropriate education, they take part in regular professional training and education both in Slovakia and abroad and they base their work on the longterm experience of INHOPE. Continuous collaboration with a psychologist forms part of the care for the staff, so as to ensure psycho-hygiene and counselling.
- **Prevention:** The collaboration of all parties in the Stopline.sk project results in statistical information about illegal content and conduct being regularly published on the Slovak web and the identification of new trends in the area of cybercrime. This helps combat child abuse, racism, xenophobia and other illegal phenomena on the web more effectively.

You can find the reporting form on the Stopline.sk website.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Monika Gregussová is a psychologist who has worked with children, teenagers and young adults for a long time. Her work is directed towards preventative, counselling, educational and leisure activities. In the *Zodpovedne.sk* project, she focuses on the prevention of risks related to new technologies, including new forms of violence (cyberbullying, promotion of violence and intolerance on the web, grooming, etc.), she performs educational activities for trainers and other adults, she is the author of methodological, preventative and information materials which were an outcome of the project.



Miro Drobny has been involved in the development of many Internet projects since 1998. He founded *eSlovensko*, the association for the development of informatisation in Slovakia, and is director of the *Zodpovedne.sk* SSIC project. He produces the animated series *Sheeplive.eu* – he devised the concept and writes the scripts. He represents Slovakia in several European institutions and projects. While working in the area of the Internet, together with his colleagues he has received over twenty awards in Slovakia and abroad.

AWARDS

Awards granted to Zodpovedne.sk, Pomoc.sk, Stopline.sk, Ovce.sk:

- 2013 Winner of the World Summit Award 2013 in the category eInclusion&Empowerment, Sri Lanka.
- 2011 Special Mention within the European Award of Excellence in the City for Children competition, Stuttgart, Germany.
- 2011 Best Film Award at the European Crime Prevention Film Festival, Székesfehérvár, Hungary.
- 2011: Professional Audience Award at the European Crime Prevention Film Festival, Székesfehérvár, Hungary.
- 2010: ITAPA Award in the New Service Category, Slovakia.
- 2010: Prix Danube Award at the 20th Film Festival Bratislava, Slovakia.
- 2010: Official Selection in the TV Series Category at the International Animated Film Festival, Annecy 2010, France.
- 2010: Rainbow Marble Award for responsible approach at the International Advertising Festival, part of the International Film Festival for Children and Youth, Zlín, Czech Republic.
- 2009: International Jury Award at the 36th Ekotopfilm Festival, Slovakia.
- 2009: Special Award at the ITAPA International Congress, Slovakia.
- 2009: First Prize in Slovakia in the European Crime Prevention Prize competition, Slovakia.

CHILDREN IN THE WEB 2013

HOW TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN ON THE INTERNET

Monika Gregussová, Miro Drobny

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