



INTERNET PORN YOUR CHILD'S SOURCE OF SEX EDUCATION?



www.safer surfing.org

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YOUR CHILD'S SOURCE OF SEX EDUCATION?

"Safersurfing" informational brochure for parents

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Safersurfing—a non-profit organization for the protection of children, youth and adults on the internet from addictive content, especially pornography and help for affected persons and their family.

Safersurfing offers information, presentations and practical assistance all over Europe.

1	INTRODUCTION	5
1.1	Range of Activities of the Non-Profit Organisation "Safersurfing"	5
1.2	Our Key Concerns	5
1.3	Purpose of the Brochure	5
1.4	Target Groups	6
2	BASIC PRINCIPLES	7
2.1	Need for Self-Protection and Protection of Minors	7
2.2	Facts and Figures	7
2.3	Responsible Use of New Media	9
3	PORNOGRAPHY	13
3.1	Children and Youth	13
3.2	Help for Affected Children and Youth	14
3.3	What to Do if Your Child is already Addicted?	15
3.4	What to Look for in a Protection Software?	16
4	PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION	17
4.1	Frequently Asked Questions	17
5	LIST OF REFERENCES	21
6	INTERNET PROTECTION PROGRAM	24

Image: Life-Of-Pix LEEROY Agency from Montreal,
pixabay.com



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1.1 RANGE OF ACTIVITIES OF THE NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION “SAFERSURFING”

- Protection of children, youth and adults on the internet
- Prevention and information for affected persons and their spouses and relatives
- Referral and support of self-help groups
- Speakers at seminars, parent & teacher training courses and conferences
- General assistance and information about counselling centres

1.2 OUR KEY CONCERNS

- Help and assistance with addiction through counselling and conveying of values
 - Emphasis on pornography
- Preventive measures:
 - Pointing out the dangers of the internet
 - How do I train my child to deal with the new media in a responsible way?
 - Information on the topic of pornography and support

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE BROCHURE

- Information & education
- Specific tips
- Help with question & problems

INTRODUCTION

1.4 TARGET GROUPS

Parents

Today's parents generally did not grow up with the internet, especially smart-phones. Therefore, educating their own children in this virtual world is completely new to them. But as a parent one has to face this

challenge. Parents bear the primary responsibility for their children, also in the world of media, and have to help their children use the Internet in a responsible way.



Image: Goodluz, www.goodluz.fr, shutterstock.com

2.1 NEED FOR SELF-PROTECTION AND PROTECTION OF MINORS

Knowing how to deal with electronic devices—and thus the virtual world—is a basic skill in the workplace nowadays. Generally, the internet is a neutral medium. It offers fast ways of communication, serves as a pool of knowledge and information, and as a platform for data storage.

However, content transported via the internet is unfiltered. Anyone can publish anything, regardless of the content or the author's motive. This web content is not adjusted to the age, knowledge and maturity level of certain individuals, and certainly not to children.

It is easy for personal data, pictures and private content to unintentionally become accessible to the public. Once this

information is on the internet, it is often impossible to have these “digital footprints” erased from the net.

This can have a damaging and destructive effect and influence on a young person's life. The help of adults who are aware of these facts and consequences, is therefore very important.

Since we are well aware of the situation and have talked to many people about this topic, we want to pass on our experience and knowledge to protect young people and invite them to use media in a responsible way.

2.2 FACTS AND FIGURES

Our surveys in collaboration with adolescents revealed:

- First contact with pornography: boys and girls who are approximately 11 years old.
- Sex education: $\frac{3}{4}$ of the interviewees haven't had proper sex education
- Access via schoolmates (smart-phones), older siblings, other teenagers, adults, print media, ...
- Hardly any PCs, laptops, smart-phones are equipped with proper child protection software

BASIC PRINCIPLES



Image: Petr Kratochvil, pixabay.com

Porn industry involves the production and distribution of sexually explicit and offensive materials that are used to entertain adults. The porn trade is carried out through a diverse range of media including literature, photos, audio, animation and video games. However, the most popular components of the trade are adult motion pictures and Internet porn.

The porn industry is a major component of the world economy, generating large scale revenue and employment. According to toptenreviews.com, over \$ 3,000 is spent every second across the world on pornography. However, it is difficult to estimate the accurate statistics for the entire industry as a large part of the industry operates underground.¹

Thirty years ago 'hardcore' pornography usually meant the explicit depiction of sexual intercourse. Now hardcore has evolved and is increasingly dominated by the sadomasochistic themes ... all involving scripts fusing sex with hatred and humiliation. Hardcore pornography now explores the world of perversion, while soft-core is now what hardcore was a few decades ago ... The comparatively tame soft-core pictures of yesteryear ... now show up on mainstream media all day long, in the pornification of everything, including television, rock videos, soap operas, advertisements, and so on.²

Some Statistics:³

- *Worldwide Internet porn revenue is \$4.9 billion, and the US alone contributes 2.84 billion.*
- *12 % of the websites on the Internet are pornographic.*
- *25 % of all search engine requests are pornography related – that's 68 million a day.*



Image: Split Shire, pixabay.com

2.3 RESPONSIBLE USE OF NEW MEDIA

Tips for parents

The responsible use of new media has to be learned first and this can primarily succeed by taking some preventive steps:

■ Your own example is the most important factor in teaching children to interact responsibly in the virtual world. Invest time in your relationship with your children; set an example to be open and honest; create an atmosphere where problems are addressed openly and where worries and failure can be brought to light and talked about constructively.

■ Recognize and satisfy needs: teach your child to notice his or her own desires, for instance for attention or physical contact and make room for these needs to be met. However, not every need must be satisfied immediately, a certain self-control can be learned.

■ Don't always conform to everything; withstand peer pressure (for example: "everybody else has a smart phone").

■ Start small—expand slowly: Children might need a phone to make calls or text in case of an emergency, but they don't need a smart phone with unlimited internet access.

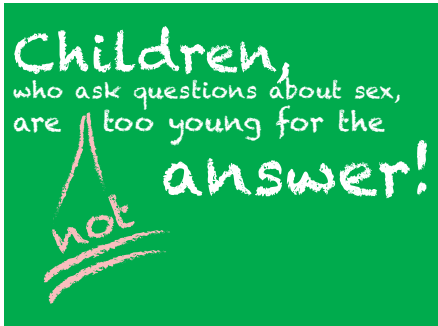
■ What children see or hear when they're with friends, at school, on the playground, in sports clubs etc. is usually out of their parent's reach. This is where it is important to be watchful and sensitive: casually speak to your children, touch on certain topics and watch your child's reaction, make time and opportunity to talk.

■ Parents should be aware of the fact that the game and telecom industry is interested in turning children into long term customers from an early age on. It is being conveyed that children just need to have "media literacy" in order to critically deal with the internet.



Image: Jan Vášek, pixabay.com

1 JUNE 29, 2010• SEX INDUSTRY• BY ECONOMYWATCH, www.economywatch.com
2 Doidge, N. (2007). The Brain That Changes Itself. New York: Penguin Books, 102.
3 OnlineSchools.org 2010



Sex Education

■ Children, teenagers and adolescents should be allowed to ask questions and must be taken seriously. They should also expect a proper, clear and realistic answer appropriate to their age. Children who ask questions about sex are not too young for an answer!

■ It does not have to be the one “big talk”; certain topics come up in everyday life like pregnancy, birth, love, infatuation. There are also children’s books which cover such topics in a way appropriate for children and help adults to find the right words.

■ Children also have to be informed that sometimes sexuality is being practised in an abusive and unhealthy way. Especially by means of the new media, children will sooner or later be confronted with sexual content that unsettles, disturbs and shocks (such as violent or degrading material). Children need to be told about this ahead of time. They need to know that certain things are not okay, even if “everyone does it” and that there is nothing they can’t talk to their parents about.

Sex education related to the Internet

Internet users must also be equipped with the right skills to be able to deal with difficult content on the web:

■ **Unfiltered, often wrong information:** One has to be aware of the fact that information from the internet doesn’t necessarily come from reliable sources.

■ **Advertisement:** It is important to realize that we are all actively targeted by advertising companies and how much we are influenced by ads on the internet.

■ **“The transparent person”:** Nothing that is posted on the net can be completely erased. Teens and adolescents might not think this important at the moment, but no later than when they want to apply for a job, some of the posts could become their undoing. Young people should therefore be warned of giving away too much information.

■ **Mobbing and Cyberbullying:** these words have become more important in this age of smart-phones. Incidents of mobbing are being filmed and put on the internet. It only takes seconds for someone to be ridiculed and shamed publicly.

The entire Internet has become a haven for bullies because anonymity makes them unaccountable for their actions and virtually impossible to confront face-to-face. ⁴

The best way to stop mobbing is through education and cooperation between parents, teachers and pupils.

■ **Risk of addiction:** addiction to the internet, games and pornography

The reason for an addiction is often the wish to flee reality. The internet offers many opportunities to find places to linger and hide.

■ **Desensitization:** loss of ability to empathise

Today's college students are 40-per-cent less empathetic than those of the 1980s and 1990s, says a University of Michigan study that analysed the personality tests of 13,737 students over 30 years.

The increase in callous reality TV shows and the astronomical growth of social networking and texting - technologies that allow people to tune others out when they don't feel like engaging - may be to blame. ⁵



⁴ <https://hidingbehindthescreens.wordpress.com/>

⁵ <http://www.ns.umich.edu/new/releases/>

more and more, increasingly direct, increasingly obvious, increasingly fierce, harder and harder, increasingly brutal, more and more often, increasingly unreal

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more and more, increasingly direct, increasingly obvious, increasingly fierce, harder and harder, increasingly brutal, more and more often, increasingly unreal

Graphic:

Every day we are confronted with nude images and the like through TV, newspapers, billboards and smart-phones, it has become part of our lives. Of course, not every nude picture is necessarily pornography, but the boundaries between the two are often blurred and various people might have a different perception.

Pornography is widely spread in our society and, on the surface, is even viewed as enlightening or rewarding, but it has an alarming impact on children and adolescents.

3.1 CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children do not actively search for pornography but mostly stumble across it accidentally and unprepared, or others might show it to them.

80 % of children aged between 8 and 16 years old have come across pornography while doing homework on the computer.⁶

Since the first sexual impressions are very formative, children are especially shocked, disturbed and unable to cope when coming across pornographic material. By learning about sex on the internet, false impressions of reality take root in children's minds. They think pornography is a desirable reality.

They often cannot discern between the real and the virtual world, because they do not have the means of comparison. Therefore it is harder for these children to grow up knowing real, affectionate, and intimate sexuality. When children learn about sex in this way, they often feel attracted and repelled at the same time, an effect that both arouses and disgusts them. For this reason negative and positive feelings mix with each other and create ambiguity and confusion.

Because of these striking and trite stereotypes, the development of a positive self-image in which children have their own wishes, preferences and feelings, is greatly impaired.

PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography or porn is the portrayal of explicit sexual subject matter for the purposes of sexual excitement and erotic satisfaction.⁷



⁶ Retrieved from on 16 September 2015 from familysafemedia.com/pornography_statistics.html

⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pornography

In the world of pornography, sexuality is used to build an illusory world that is all about lust and power, instead of a gift that forms by trust and love. Human beings are becoming a commodity. This world makes us believe that everything is about gratifying our own pleasures and that this gives us the right to use the other person

for this purpose. On the internet one can get sex by one mouse click—anytime, fast, without any effort. One does not have to invest in a relationship with another person. In almost all pornographic material, women are shown as subordinates. They have to be ready at all times and are reduced to a sexual object.

3.2 HELP FOR AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Parents and other close persons should have an open ear for questions and needs of their children and adolescents. It is important not to act shocked or be contemptuous when talking with young people, but to show sympathy and neither make a huge issue of it, nor play it down.

The things that a young person has experienced or seen cannot be undone, but we can give children a framework that helps them understand and deal with what has happened. Above all, parents must be involved in order to successfully deal with these issues.

It is very important to show what reality is like and that sexuality is something enriching and should be beautiful for both sides and that intimacy is something so valuable that it is worth retaining.

Think about how to organize free time more deliberately, for instance doing sports or pursuing a hobby. Sport activities are especially good, since physical exercise has a satisfying impact as well.

It is also necessary to install a good child protection software and to put your PC/ laptop in a central location in your house.



3.3 WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS ALREADY ADDICTED?

Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, nicotine) or engages in an activity (e.g., gambling, sex, shopping) that can be pleasurable but the continued use/act of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary life responsibilities, such as work, relationships, or health.⁸

Signs of addictive behaviour relating to the internet are:

- Large amount of time in front of the smart phone/laptop
- Social contacts decrease
- Other things that used to be important before become insignificant
- Money is invested

The first step out of an addiction is the realization that one is an addict and the second step is looking for outside help.

8 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/addiction>



Image: Wilhelm Georg Adelberger

3.4 WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PROTECTION SOFTWARE?

Because of the rapid progress in the digital world, any protection software must comply with the latest state of technology.

It is therefore necessary to keep up with the latest developments.

Software that is suitable for protecting your children should have the following features:

- Not easily cracked (for instance protected by a password covering the whole operating system)
- Balance between secure surfing and trouble-free working

- Time limits, protocols about pages visited, age appropriate settings.

For more information about internet child protection software: <https://salfeld.com/en/>



Image: Isabelle Dreameau

4.1 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the places and circumstances I should be especially aware of?

It is better to be on the safe side and once too often forbid your children to visit or sleep over at somebody's house that you don't know very well, than to allow it rashly. Get to know your children's circle of friends well, others might have material (like videos, games etc.) that you haven't thought of. Try to appeal to the young person's reason and increasingly put responsibility into their own hands.

How can I talk to my child without embarrassment?

With simple, age appropriate words, with examples that are easy to understand, without mincing words, without making fun or finding something embarrassing yourself.

What is the best way to support and protect my child?

It is important for your children to know not only about their own sexual development, but also about what changes the other sex goes through. Sex education is not only

about passing on one's knowledge about sexual intercourse. Children need to know about bodily changes like growth of beard, armpit and pubic hair, breasts, menstruation, ejaculation, etc. It is also essential to talk to children about things that they will surely be confronted with—for instance pleasant and unpleasant touch, good and bad secrets and pornography.

When is the right time to talk to your children about these things?

Talking to children about these issues should happen continuously and according to the child's age. From the very beginning one should talk about the body and sexuality in a natural way without embarrassment.

Children will sooner or later wonder where babies come from. When this happens you should not find excuses, but say right away that this has something to do with mom and dad. If children continue to ask, then answer their questions in a calm and purposeful way. In no way should their questions be ridiculed. Children should learn to set their own boundaries and to respect other people's boundaries. In this

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION



Support for parents:
www.saferchildren.org

Graphic: Wilhelm Georg Adelberger

area parents are examples as well. For instance, eventually children will want to change their clothes by themselves. This is something we should support and not belittle by saying something inappropriate like: "No one's paying attention anyway."

Am I not putting silly ideas in their head, if I talk to my children too early?

No. If at some time your child is confronted with pornography and doesn't know what it is, your child might say nothing and carry around a secret full of shame. This can be a great burden to a child.

Often younger children come into contact with pornography through older children who might even put pressure on the younger ones not to say anything. Here children often run into an inner conflict. But if the child knows that mom and dad know about this and have talked to me about it, I don't have to hide anything and can tell them everything, then it will be much easier for the child to tell his parents about this stressful situation.



Image: Sunny studio, shutterstock.com

How can I keep my child safe, without destroying the mutual trust between us?

As an adult I have the duty to act in the best interest of the child. Children do not like everything their parents decide, but it should benefit their welfare. This is an argument you can bring forward, especially at times when your teenagers don't want to listen. This way you can show that you are not installing an internet protection software to irritate them, but because you love them. Your children will accept a protection software more easily if you tell them that you are installing it to protect yourself as well. It is much more enjoyable to surf the internet without any annoying pop-ups and without risking to accidentally come across pornographic websites.

Why should I talk to my child about pornography? We don't have anything like that in our house and we strictly monitor which TV programmes our child may watch.

Sadly, nowadays it is not a question of: Will my child see pornographic material? But rather: When will that be? From the time that children or their friends have free internet access, sooner or later they will come into contact with pornographic images. We currently get a lot of inquiries

from elementary schools on how to deal with this. Every smart phone offers your child the possibility to see everything. Children don't usually consciously search for pornographic material, but often stumble across sites that parents wouldn't have dreamed possible.

I have missed the chance to talk to my children in time and have recently noticed that my son/daughter surfs pornographic sites.

At least now be clear on this and speak to your child, even if he or she doesn't want to hear. As father or mother tell them about your own experiences. Even if nothing changes at the moment, we have heard of situations where the child comes and talks to the parents 2 to 3 years later, asking for advice. The words you say do stay in their minds.

Try to find a person of trust for your child outside of your own closer family where your child can unburden his or her heart (uncle, aunt, family friend, youth group leader...).

We hope that this brochure has helped you. You can contact us any time if you have questions or need further help.



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Parental Control for Windows and Android Devices

With Child Control parents protect their children from harmful internet pages and can also limit the amount of time the child uses the computer.

Most important features of Child Control:

- Limits PC and Internet Usage Times
- Powerful Internet Filter
- Restrict System Settings/Folders
- Access from any Internet PC

<https://salfeld.com/en/>



COVENANT EYES—protection software for Mac, iPhone, and iPad

- <https://covenanteyes.com/>

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