

STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01pm on 11 Feb

North East celebrates Safer Internet Day 2014

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- Prime Minister and Olympic gymnast Beth Tweddle join hundreds of organisations in pledging their support for the day organised by the UK Safer Internet Centre
 - Research launched to mark the day reveals a generation of young digital creators
 - More than two thirds of parents say that they have discussed online safety with their children
 - However, just 1 in 5 parents say that they have spoken to their children about how to report concerns online
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[11th February 2014] Hundreds of schools, companies, charities and police forces are joining the UK Safer Internet Centre in reaching out to millions of people across the UK today for Safer Internet Day 2014. It is a fantastic opportunity for everyone to promote the safe, responsible and creative use of technology.

Research launched today by the UK Safer Internet Centre shows that 2 in 5 young people aged 7-19 have created an app, website, game or blog. The study of more than 21,000 schoolchildren shows the incredible opportunities offered by the internet and the importance of ensuring it's a safe place.

Today is the eleventh annual Safer Internet Day with the theme 'Let's create a better internet together'. Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, and recognised globally in over a hundred countries, the day provides a platform to celebrate this digital creativity and to encourage the safe, responsible use of technology.

Everyone is being encouraged to play their part in creating a better internet and over 500 organisations have pledged their support for Safer Internet Day 2014. High profile partners including the BBC, Tesco, Microsoft, Disney Club Penguin, Facebook, Google and the NSPCC are coming together to deliver a range of inspiring activities across the UK.

One of the key themes coming out of the day is the need to help more parents in having conversations with their children about internet safety. Research launched today reveals that more than two-thirds (68%) of parents say that they have spoken to their child/children about at least one key internet safety issue with almost half (43%) of parents with 11-15 year olds saying that they have spoken to their child/children about online pornography.

However, only 1 in 5 (19%) say that they have spoken to their child/children about how to report something online, which may mean that many children lack the skills to respond to

cyberbullying, sexual exploitation and inappropriate content, showing there's still work to be done to make the internet a safer, better place.

The online study, conducted for the UK Safer Internet Centre by ComRes, identifies where parents are more confident talking about internet safety and highlights the gaps:

- Only 37% of parents say that they have spoken to their child/children about what to do if something upsets them online, despite this being one of the most important messages for children.
- Almost half of parents say that they have spoken to their child/children about meeting strangers on the internet (48%) and protecting personal information online (43%).
- People being unkind online is the top online concern for children, but only a third of parents (35%) report that they have spoken to their child/children about cyberbullying, and only a quarter (23%) say they have spoken to their child/children about being a good friend online.
- Only 1 in 5 parents report that they have spoken to their child/children about sexting (21%).

To help more parents take the first step, the UK Safer Internet Centre has produced a series of [conversation starters](#).

Voicing his support for the day, **Prime Minister David Cameron** said:

"I'm delighted to support Safer Internet Day and the work of the UK Safer Internet Centre. As a father of young children, I know how much parents worry about what their kids can see online. Under this Government, we have seen progress, with the introduction of family friendly filters and Google and Microsoft clamping down on child abuse images online. There is nothing more important than protecting our children; Government, industry, charity and parents all have a part to play."

Will Gardner, Director of the UK Safer Internet Centre, said:

"Everyone has responsibility to make internet safety a priority. Young people are increasingly becoming digital creators and we must equip them with the skills to continue to create and innovate by working together to make the internet a great and safe place."

"This Safer Internet Day is the biggest one yet - the fantastic range of supporters really reflects how widespread and important this issue is, and we are delighted to see such collaborations where schools, civil society, public and private sectors are all championing the same cause".

Olympic gymnast and Dancing on Ice star Beth Tweddle has pledged her support for this year's Safer Internet Day. Commenting on her involvement, Beth said:

"It's really important young people feel safe and empowered online and know how to report anything that upsets them or to tell an adult. It's also vital that parents feel confident enough to discuss online safety with their children. It's why I'm supporting the day to help raise awareness of what to do and all the help that's available."

What's happening in the North East?

- Schools and youth groups across the North East are running activities for the day. For example, Central First School in Northumberland will be holding a whole day event with pupils and parents, including making an e-safety video, posters and a web radio show.
- Northumbria Police have pledged their support for the day and will have pages on Ebeat.org.uk – their website for young people, parents and teachers.
- The Department for Work & Pensions will be holding a two day event for staff at the Newcastle Pension Centre in Tyneview Park.

Creating a better internet together

From 12 noon today, the UK Safer Internet Centre is presenting SID TV online, a live TV show at www.saferinternetdaytv.com with advice and practical information from experts and providers such as Facebook, Twitter and BT for teachers, young people and parents on internet safety and issues such as cyberbullying, sexting, parental controls, reporting and privacy.

Later on, the UK Safer Internet Centre is hosting an event at Microsoft's head offices in London bringing together a panel of young people with experts across government, industry and education to hear more about what a better internet means to each of these important audiences. Key speakers at the event will be Beth Tweddle, Olympic gymnast and Dancing on Ice star, and the Rt Hon Maria Miller MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Nina Devani, a 15 year old app creator from Luton, is one of the young panellists attending the event. She launched her app when she was 14 years old and went on to win the Safer Internet Day 2013 Youth Achievements Competition.

Talking about the importance of Safer Internet Day for celebrating the fantastic opportunities the internet offers, Nina said: "I firmly believe there is some genius in every child and the internet can be utilised to find and stimulate that special something that everyone has. There is no other medium that can provide access to the knowledge, expertise and experience that can so easily be shared by people on a global basis. The internet is a door to endless opportunities and youth are a key to endless creativity. We need to support young people to develop digital skills, and ensure they know how to keep themselves safe online."

For more information on the activities taking place to celebrate Safer Internet Day, visit the [UK Safer Internet Centre website](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk).

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Media contacts

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Notes to editors

Research:

- ComRes interviewed 1,123 parents online between the 3rd and 9th January 2014. Data were weighted to be representative of all GB adults aged 18+. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.
- UK Safer Internet Centre surveyed over 21,000 young people aged 7-19 across the UK in the Safer Internet Day 2013 'Have your Say' online survey. 26% had created a game online, 18% had created a website, 13% had created an app and 11% had created a blog.

Useful resources

- **Take the [Safer Internet Day quiz](#)**
- **Watch [SID TV](#):** streamed live on SID, with content for primary schools, secondary schools, parents and professionals
- **Run educational sessions for young people and parents:** check out the [SID school packs](#)
- **Promote SID on your website or blog** using the [banners, logos and template text](#)
- **Tweet us [@UK_SIC](#)** and promote SID using [#SID2014](#)
- **Reach out to parents:** share the conversation starters on the [SID parent page](#).
- **Watch the [European Commission's film](#)**

About Safer Internet Day:

Safer Internet Day 2014 – Let's create a better internet together.

Safer Internet Day (SID) is organised in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) in February of each year to promote the safe and responsible use of online technology and mobile phones for children and young people. Safer Internet Day 2014 will take place on Tuesday 11th February 2014, with the theme 'Let's create a better internet together'. The day offers the opportunity to focus on both the creative things that children and young people are doing online, as well as the role and responsibility that all stakeholders have in helping to create a better internet.

The UKSIC provides Safer Internet Day specific resources and support for children and young people, parents and carers as well as teachers and school staff and facilitates a wide range of organisations to join together to amplify the safer internet message.

The UK Safer Internet Centre is a partnership of three leading charitable organisations, Childnet International, the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) and the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). These organisations are committed to working to make a safer and better internet. All partners recognise the unparalleled opportunities the internet offers and actively encourage its positive use for social, leisure, economic and educational advancement. The partners all work towards the Childnet target; to make the internet a great and safe place for children. The UK Safer Internet Centre is online at www.saferinternet.org.uk.

Quotes from Safer Internet Day supporters

Communications Minister Ed Vaizey said:

“The internet is one of the most profound and era-changing inventions in human history. While it can bring huge benefits it has also posed some real difficulties particularly in terms of protecting children from harmful content. Safer Internet Day is an excellent reminder of the responsibility we all share for making the internet safe. Making the internet safe and enjoyable for all means everyone playing a part and taking responsibility.”

Children and Families Minister Edward Timpson said:

“Simple conversations can help keep children stay safe online, so it is fantastic to see the UK Safer Internet Centre helping parents talk about this important issue with their children. Safer Internet Day is a great initiative to raise awareness about staying safe and being a good online citizen. Children from the age of five will be soon be taught how to stay safe and communicate safely and respectfully when they go online.”

Saul Nasse, Controller of BBC Learning, said:

“BBC Learning is working closely with Childnet and the UK Safer Internet Centre to help families stay safe online. The poll we commissioned gives us some revealing insights into how children access the internet on smartphones and tablets – and raises questions about whether parents know enough about how to protect them. We’ve produced a series of high-impact short films which will feature on bbc.co.uk/webwise, alongside the updated ‘how-to’ guides we produced recently. As well as all that, the power of BBC programmes will really make an impact, with Breakfast TV, News, Radios 1, 2 and 4 and CBBC all flagging up the Safer Internet message in different ways. This is an excellent example of Learning in partnership with external organisations and BBC programmes to provide an important public service”.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, said:

“The internet is for many children and young people a channel of socialisation. We must do what we can to make it a safe space. We work with partners to promote the responsible use of the internet. We are dedicated to investigating all incidents of concern, including child abuse. To protect children and young people from harm, we will investigate those who misuse the internet. We encourage parents, guardians and all those that have contact with children and young people to learn together, how to keep safe online this Safer Internet Day and every day.”

Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of Mother’s Union and author of the government review into the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood, said:

“Safer Internet Day provides the perfect opportunity for parents and carers to start an ongoing dialogue with children and young adults about what they are doing online. By talking with their children, parents can help to develop their emotional resilience, offer tips on how to be discerning digital citizens as well as highlighting many of the positive opportunities the internet affords.”

Lucy Woodward, Interactive Live Services Director at Disney Club Penguin (EMEA), said:

“As a mum of two, I know the safety of your child is the biggest concern for any family. That's why, at Disney Club Penguin, we seek to help families learn the online rules of the road together to ensure their kids’ experiences remain positive as they move onto other parts of the internet. Safety is our priority and always will be.

To tackle this issue head on, we recently launched our It Starts With You campaign, with partners including Childnet, which aims to empower kids to take the lead in spreading positive behaviour online and gives their parents the tools to better support them.

Whether you’re a parent or a child you can make a real difference to the future of the web, so it is great to see so many people collaborating to support Safer Internet Day this year and the ongoing mission to create a better internet ”.

Peter Wanless, CEO of the NSPCC, said:

“Making the internet safer for children and young people is the child protection challenge of this generation. And Safer Internet Day is a chance for everyone - industry, Government, charities, schools, and families – to talk about online safety and share knowledge about what works.”

“A safer internet is built not only by technical endeavour and policies, but by the behaviour of the people that use it. We all need to encourage young people to seek help when they are upset by something or someone online. And service providers and website owners must continue to make it easier for young people to report upsetting content and behaviour, and take swift action to tackle it.”

Naomi Gummer, Public Policy Manager, Google, said:

“Google is proud to support Safer Internet Day. We are celebrating the day on Google's homepage across 65 countries to raise awareness among young people of the skills they need to enjoy their online experience safely.”

Simon Milner, UK Policy Director for Facebook said:

“Safer Internet Day is a great reminder that we all share responsibility for creating a better and safer internet. Over the first decade of Facebook, we’ve learnt that partnerships - with schools, charities, researchers and policy makers - are essential to help young people keep themselves safe, especially by being able to resolve problems they come across.”

Nicola Hodson, General Manager of Marketing and Operations, Microsoft, said:

“We are proud to be working with the Safer Internet Centre to host this year’s Safer Internet Day at Microsoft’s offices. Of course, the internet is there to be enjoyed, but as access becomes ubiquitous across all kinds of devices both in and away from the home, we also have a responsibility to help create safe experiences. New threats evolve all the time, so Microsoft staff and our trained IT champions are holding sessions for young people at UK Youth centres and schools today to equip them with the most up to date guidance to help keep them safe online.”

Junior Minister Bell MLA, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland, said:

“Last year, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland commissioned a survey of all final year primary school children here. And the results that are now available give us a very clear picture of how much a part the Internet plays in their lives.”

“I believe that in Northern Ireland we can all work together to increase child internet safety. We can do this through the measures that we take within government, within our schools and within the home.”

“As a parent I believe that we must all be alert to the dangers that exist online and be ready to take an active interest in protecting our children. And that is why it’s a privilege to be adding my support to this year’s Safer Internet Day.”

Junior Minister McCann MLA, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Northern Ireland, said:

“I appreciate the challenges facing many parents. You want your children to learn the digital skills which are essential in everyday life but you do not wish to expose them to the potential dangers of the online world. The internet is a fantastic educational resource. However, it can also subject children to inappropriate or harmful material. Children can also through their behaviour inadvertently put themselves at risk.”

“It is understandable if parents feel confused and daunted about how to protect their children from online risks. As technology becomes more sophisticated, the need to ensure appropriate e-safety messages get through to the right people becomes ever more pressing. All of us have a

responsibility to protect our children and young people online. There is simply no room for complacency.”

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People, Scottish Government, said:

“I am delighted to support Safer Internet Day and this year’s theme - Let’s create a better internet together – is such a positive message that I hope it inspires lots of families to talk about it.”

“The Scottish Government is doing a lot of work with partners to make us all better at sharing information with parents and young people on staying safe online. The safety and wellbeing of Scotland’s children and young people, wherever they are, is our priority and we owe it to them to educate on how to get the best out of the internet.”

“The internet offers young people unprecedented opportunities to explore, learn and communicate and we can all play a part in making it better and safer.”

First Minister Carwyn Jones, Welsh Government, said:

“The theme of this year’s Safer Internet Day is ‘Let’s create a Better Internet Together’, which encapsulates what we as a government are working to achieve. That is why I strongly supported moves for online pornography to be blocked by default and why we are working hard to promote e-safety.”

“As we know, the internet has vast learning potential for our young people, which is why we are investing significantly in digital learning in Wales. With this potential however, comes some level of risk. It is the responsibility of all of us to make sure our young people are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to use the internet safely.”

“I’m delighted that the Welsh Government is once again supporting Safer Internet Day, and I’m confident that the events held around the country will help to raise awareness of the issues among young people, families and the wider community.”