

Play your part for a better internet

Background Information

This theme has been chosen by the INSAFE network as it remains highly relevant in today's ever changing technologically-capable society. This theme encourages young people to think about how they play a part in making the internet a positive place, and consider what to do if they experience anything negative online. The theme for Safer Internet Day 2016 highlights the issues and concerns that young people have when they're online, but the theme primarily focuses on practical solutions and responding appropriately to negative content so that we can all 'play our part for a better internet'.

Slide 1

This assembly is for Safer Internet Day 2016.

Safer Internet Day in the UK is run by the UK Safer Internet Centre and this year's theme 'Play your part in a better internet' is an empowering message. During this assembly, we're going to be thinking about what you can do yourself to make the internet a better place and how you can respond positively to things you experience online.

Slide 2

The internet is an amazing place which can help us in our real lives, provide us with entertainment, allow us to communicate and help us learn new things.

- What things do you like to do online?
Talk to the person next to you for 30 seconds and share your top three things you do online.
- Have you created anything online that helps others? (e.g. shared your ideas/tips, answered questions, created blogs or vlogs, etc.)

Slide 3

The internet can help us in many ways to keep us connected to the world around us, as well allowing us to connect with other people and share our thoughts, opinions, views and ideas. The internet provides an amazing platform for working collaboratively and learning from others, as well as for freedom of expression.

Notes:

- **#notinmyname** started as a result of people speaking out against actions committed by the so called Islamic State in the name of Islam: www.isisnotinmyname.com/
- **Batkid Saves City** was run by the San Francisco Make A Wish Foundation for a 5 year old boy named Miles who has leukaemia: <http://sf.wish.org/wishes/wish-stories/i-wish-to-be/wish-to-be-batkid>

Slide 4

However, not everything experienced online is positive. While many conversations and interactions are positive and respectful, there are also disagreements online (just as there are offline). People's messages and ideas can be misunderstood, which can lead to conflict.

Slide 4 cont.

Of course there are also people who seek to upset or harass others online deliberately through hurtful messages and actions.

The internet offers access to potentially unlimited information, but not all of this is accurate or trustworthy. People may seek to pass off their opinions or views as fact, or provide a very biased view on a topic.

There is a broad range of content available online, which also means that we may see or experience things that we find distasteful, offensive or even upsetting.

Slide 5

Who can use the internet?

Press/click to display the globe animation and the message 'Everyone!'

Explain that many people use the internet every day for many different reasons and by the end of 2015, 3.2 billion people were expected to be online (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-32884867>).

Slide 6

Ask the young people 'Can you say whatever you want online?'

There may be a number of different responses and it is important to clarify that while the internet offers freedom of expression (free speech), there can still be consequences if those views or ideas expressed break the law or are deliberately crafted to incite hatred, threaten others or cause harm.

There is also the issue of censorship online, and whether anyone has the right to silence the voice of another person, regardless of what they are trying to say.

Highlight the UK Safer Internet Centre definition of 'online hate' and that hate speech online is not just limited to race or religion, but also applies to gender, transgender identity, sexuality and disability.

Slide 7

Share the tips for responding to negative content online. Remind the young people that they may take different actions depending on the context of the situation. Highlight that challenging other people's opinions online can be done, but it requires a calm approach. Responding with anger or malice will usually make the situations worse, potentially putting them on the receiving end of the abuse. It can also have the unintended consequence of reinforcing the other person's pre-existing views rather than persuading them to change their stance.

Remind young people that if they ever experience anything negative online that worries or upsets them (whether it is directed at them or not) then they should always tell someone. For many young people, a friend may be the first person they turn to for support, but it is important for them to also tell a trusted adult who can help discuss the situation, reassure them that a solution to the problem can be found, and help them devise a plan to move forward positively.

Slide 8

Show the winning entry from the secondary category of Childnet's 2015 Film Competition by Keith from Weaver's Academy.

The film highlights that we have a choice in how we choose to communicate online. It is sometimes easy to be negative towards others and make fun of them, but thinking before we post a comment can help us take a more positive approach in our online interactions.

Slides 9 & 10

Read out the scenario and discuss the possible choices. Give the young people a few moments to discuss with the person next to them what they would do.

Asking for hands up to each choice is the quickest way to see what the young people think and help guide any further discussion. Some choices will lead to further questioning:

- If you report the image, will it be taken down? (Content will only be removed by a service provider if it breaks their terms and conditions. An image of a dead animal may break these terms on some services, but not on others.)
- If you ask the person to take the image down/stop sharing it, do you think they will listen to you? (In some cases, people do not realise that they have offended others and will respect their wishes.)
- If we just ignore distasteful or offensive content online, will it just eventually go away?

Slides 11 & 12

Read out the scenario and discuss the possible choices. Give the young people a few moments to discuss with the person next to them what they would do.

Further discussion might focus on how talking to someone face to face can help resolve some differences, as views and opinions exchanged online can sometimes be misunderstood. Attempts at sarcasm or irony aren't always recognised online, but are easier to understand offline through someone's tone of voice and expression, and non-verbal cues.

Highlight again that retaliation often makes the situation worse. Point out that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, and however much we may disagree with someone else, we sometimes have to accept that their mind will not be changed. Of course, if that opinion is deemed to break the law in terms of being hateful or threatening then further action will be required (e.g. report the comment to the service provider, tell a trusted adult and possibly report it to the police).

Slides 13 & 14

Read out the scenario and discuss the possible choices. Give the young people a few moments to discuss with the person next to them what they would do.

Further discussion might focus on the importance of being a positive and supportive friend to others. This support might be given online through positive comments, or young people may prefer to give this support offline by talking to their friends and encouraging them to ask a trusted adult for help if the situation warrants it.

Slide 15

Who do you think is responsible for making the internet a better place?

Remind the young people that all these people on this slide can help make the internet a better place in some way or another. But actually, it's important to remember that they as individuals are also responsible, and it's up to them to play their part to make the internet a better place.

Slide 16

Encourage the young people to play their part for a better internet by supporting Safer Internet Day through social media with positive comments about how they would make the internet a better place, using the hashtag #SID2016 on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

They also might wish to use the #shareaheart hashtag alongside a picture of them making a heart with their hands, or writing a wish for a better internet on a heart.

Remind the young people that they may be continuing the discussions started in this assembly in some of their classes through lessons or activities.

