[3-5] The Social You: Connecting with Others

Students learn how to differentiate between Internet friends and in-person friends.

Lesson topics include: Social interaction via forums, blogs, chat rooms, and online games; how to avoid spam and phishing scams; the importance of keeping personal information private; and strategies for responding to uncomfortable requests.

Lesson Summary

When children access the web, they can put themselves and their families at risk. This lesson presents a student-centered summary of the safety issues that can arise when interacting with others on the Internet. The lesson addresses concepts like personal privacy, Internet anonymity, distinguishing between Internet friends and in-person friends, and appropriate interaction with others on social media. Classroom activities to be conducted before, during, and after the digital lesson help students better connect with these important concepts.

By the end of the lesson, students will know...
- How Internet friends are different from in-person friends
- That you never really know who people are on the Internet
- How forums allow for online discussion of topics
- How blogs allow users to keep an online journal or diary
- Why it's important to never post private information online
- How Google and other search engines can be used to find private information
- How chat rooms pose dangers to personal privacy
- That information posted online can never be taken back
- How online games can reveal private information
- How email allows for instant communication but can lead to privacy risks
- Why posting email addresses online leads to guaranteed email spam
- Strategies for avoiding email spam and phishing attempts
- Why it's important to use strong passwords and keep them secret
- How photos shared online can inadvertently reveal private information
- How to respond to uncomfortable online requests

Pre-lesson Preparation

Download the necessary videos and handouts so that you'll have them available for use. Review all materials and decide how best to use them in your classroom—you may decide to make modifications based on your students' unique needs.

Video: **The Social You: Connecting with Others (Part I)** [16:34 runtime]

Video: **The Social You: Connecting with Others (Part II)** [8:45 runtime]

Video: **The Social You: Connecting with Others (Part III)** [13:46 runtime]

Handout: **Student Guide to The Social You: Connecting with Others** [2 pages]

"Extend the Lesson" Activity: register for an account at Common Sense Media and download lesson materials [multiple pages and handouts] – www.bit.ly/lol2-8

Essential Vocabulary

avatar – an icon or figure representing a specific person

blog – a personal website used as an online journal or diary

chat room – an electronic communication system that allows users to post messages to each other in real-time

email – electronic mail, in which messages are delivered by computer instead of by letter

forum – an internet discussion system in which users can post messages about various topics

MMOG – massively multiplayer online game; a game that allows large numbers of users to play at the same time

phishing – using the internet to trick people into giving away private information like passwords or bank accounts

social communication – sharing information between two or more people

spam – unwanted email messages

thread – the starting place for discussion on internet forums

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Pre-lesson Activity

1) Show your students the "Be Safer Online" video at NetsmartzKids, http://www.netsmartz.org/NetSmartzKids/BeSaferOnline. This video will stream over the internet, but if you have a slow or unreliable network, you may prefer to load the video ahead of time. To do so, click the play button and allow the entire video to load in your browser. When you're ready to show it to students, drag the playhead back to the start of the video and click the play button again.

2) Ask your students to describe a way that they stay safe online. Students might share perspectives verbally, by drawing a picture, by writing a sentence, or by another means—choose the strategy that works best for you and your students. When the activity ends, begin the digital lesson, as described below.

Digital Lesson

How do your students compare? Have them create a classroom chart using data from the survey.

Play the "**The Social You: Connecting with Others**" digital lesson for your students. Students will have the opportunity to vote during the lesson and see how their responses compare with those of other students. Polls for this lesson are available online at http://bit.ly/lol2-6 and http://bit.ly/lol2-7. Students can also access the polls by scanning QR codes with their mobile devices. Multiple students can vote simultaneously, or you could have all your students vote together as a class. No login is needed to respond to the poll.

This lesson's poll questions are:
- What's the best reason to be careful about what you share online?
- What's the riskiest thing about online chatting and online gaming?

Follow-up Activity

1) Show your students the "UYN: The Password Rap" video available from NetSmartz at http://www.netsmartz.org/NetSmartzKids/PasswordRap. Just like before, this video will stream over the internet, but you can download it prior to presentation if that makes you more comfortable.

2) Ask your students to work in groups to rank-order the following Internet tools, from most dangerous to least dangerous: forums, blogs, email, online games, chat rooms, and search sites. There will likely be wide variety in opinions, so encourage your students to share their opinions about why they made the choices they did. When the discussion ends, consider beginning the lesson extension, as described below.

Extend the Lesson

Follow the lesson plans for the "Talking Safely Online" lesson available online at Common Sense Media, http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/lesson/talking-safely-online-3-5. You'll need to register for an account in order to download all the materials.

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In this extension lesson, students learn that, while people can develop rewarding friendships online, they should be cautious with online-only friends and never reveal private information without asking a parent or trusted adult for permission. Students discuss the difference between online and in-person friendships, explore an online chat scenario, and complete and sign a checklist for safe online chatting.

By the end of the extension lesson, students will be able to...
- Compare and contrast online-only friends and in-person, face-to-face pals.
- Analyze why private information should not be given to anyone online without the permission of a trusted adult.
- Debate how to respond if an online-only friend asks them personal questions.

Alignment with Standards

Common Core: RL.10, RI.3, RI.4, RI.7, RI.9, RI.10, RF.4a, W.9b, SL.1a, SL.1b, SL.1c, SL.1d, SL.4, SL.6, L.6
NETS•S: 2b, 5a

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