



Web Awareness: Making the Internet a Safer Experience for Children

October 2007, Volume 2, No. 10

This newsletter, we hope, gives you some useful information to help you understand franchising and, in particular, opportunities in the educational services franchise business space. The after-school educational market exceeded \$60 billion in the U.S. in 2005 and continues to grow at a near double digit pace. So please enjoy and let us know what other topics you would like us to discuss.

About Us

At CTWorkshop creative thinking is a child's greatest asset. Since 1997 we've delivered hi-tech programs enabling children to enhance their innate creativity. We facilitate and extend a child's awesome natural ability to learn.

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The Internet is an essential part of our lives, a communications revolution, always on and available. Children do on-line research, instant message each other, join social groups like MySpace and FaceBook, place telephone calls, hook up web cams to see each other, watch the latest TV programs, podcast and download songs, get into on-line discussions and chat rooms. They buy things on line. And they easily become victims. That is why Children's Technology Workshop developed a kid's portal (www.luciboo.com) and a safe search free browser, *Firefly*, to make the Internet experience a better one for children and parents.

On August 23rd this year, Children's Technology Workshop's Toronto headquarters hosted a visit by the *Norton Connected and Protected Truck*, a "very cool" semi-trailer outfitted with computers, and manned by a team of Symantec cyber experts knowledgeable about Internet safety. The Symantec team was joined by Sergeant Robyn MacEachern of the Ontario Provincial Police who spoke to the children about Internet safety.

Studies show that 67% of pre-school age children use a computer, and 23% use the Internet. So it is important for parents and care givers to understand that toddlers are already going on-line. A simple tip for parents of children, age 2-4, is never let them be on line alone. Encourage your child to use a nickname for on-line activities.

For children age 5-7, they are ready to use newly acquired reading and writing skills. It is important for parents and caregivers to make them aware that private information about them should not be shared on line. The use of instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms and message boards at this age is inappropriate. Children in this age group may come to parents with on-line information that has made them uncomfortable. Don't freak out. Be there to talk about it.

Children, age 8-10 are socializing, connecting with the world, making moral judgments, and developing gender concepts. They are power Internet users, playing interactive games, using e-mail, exploring chat rooms, on-line forums, doing instant messaging. The good practices described above remain as important to this age group as they are to younger children. Parents should establish a shared family e-mail account rather than let children have their own. Discourage instant messaging. Only let children use monitored chat rooms and reputable message boards. Stay connected with your children about on-line activities.

For children age 11-13, the Internet becomes an essential tool for school, for music and for communication. Children this age are technology savvy. They are very sexually aware. They form cliques both off and on line. Girls in particular build on-line relationships. As before, the rules described above apply. This age group needs to understand copyright when doing file sharing, or taking text, images or artwork from the Internet for use in projects. They need to understand acceptable social behavior, not using the Internet to spread gossip, bully or make inappropriate comments about peers. Parents need to talk openly about the positives and negatives of the Internet, including discussions about healthy human sexuality and about on-line pornography.