

MALAYSIA  
July 8, 2010 Malaysian parents are generally aware of the activities being conducted online by their kids and the dangers they may encounter from exposure to inappropriate content, giving out personal information or meeting with people in real life. However, they are still underestimating the actual risks and the amount of time their kids spend on each activity.

Kids are spending an average of 19 hours online per week while their parents think they only spend 11 hours. Only 4 in 10 parents say that they always know what their child looks at online. Almost nine in 10 children have been exposed to negative experiences online which have impacted them emotionally. 25 percent of children think their parents have no idea what they do online but only 3 percent of parents admit to being in the dark about their children's online activities. In fact, 40 percent of parents are confident they know what their child looks at online.

The Norton Online Family Report, released today, is a good reminder for parents to plug into their kids online lives, if they're not already especially with kids spending an average of 76 hours online per month.

According to Effendy Ibrahim, Norton Internet Safety Advocate and Norton Business Lead for Asia, Besides highlighting the importance of online safety and security issues and its impact on children, the Norton Online Family Report 2010 offers insights and information that can empower parents to help their kids use the Internet safely. It emphasizes the role of parenting the online lives of children as well as the significance of keeping communication open and ongoing as a way to enhance Internet safety.

Greater exposure: It is not all fun and games online

Children in Malaysia are spending 19 hours a week online, and 65 percent of them think that they are spending too much time online. While parents are mostly in sync with the main activities their kids participate in, they have underestimated the extent to which the latter talk to strangers online; leaving kids exposed to potential online and offline danger. In reality, 25 percent of kids chat online with people they don't know while parents only perceived that 12 percent did. Parents need to realise the risks involved when their children interact with strangers, especially since kids are trusting by nature and can be easy targets.

The emotions kids go through

The Web has become a new playground for cybercriminals to prey on the active young Internet users and anyone who goes online is vulnerable. With 87 percent of kids having been exposed to negative experiences online, the victims are also accompanied with a range of powerful emotions that have impacted them. Kids in Malaysia felt angry (46 percent), annoyed (45 percent), upset (42 percent), shocked (40 percent), disgusted (39 percent) and afraid (35 percent) as a result of such incidents. Four in 10 Malaysian kids also reported that they have done something online that they regretted doing.

Kids need to beware of the strangers online

As social media gains more presence in the digital world, a new but real threat to kids online in Malaysia today lies in stranger danger. The study uncovered a startling trend up to 72 percent of children have had strangers try to add them as a friend on a social networking site and 27 percent met an online stranger who has tried to meet them in the real world

The good news

Malaysian kids actually want to be safe online and show a willingness to do the right thing by getting more parental involvement in their online lives. Seven in 10 Malaysian parents have house rules in place and almost four in 10 have set parental controls on their family computer. Seventy-six percent of children agree they always follow the family's rules when using the Internet. Parents are

almost always the first port of call for Malaysian kids with 42 percent of children trusting their parents the most when it comes to protecting them from being a victim of cybercrime.

What parents can do?

While kids are aware of many common sense rules for staying safe online, they are missing some important pieces of the puzzle. Only 21 percent always check for the **s** after the **http** in the URL. Only 23 percent will report suspicious behaviours to the authorities, while 21 percent will only visit websites of big brand names that they know.

There is clearly an important role for parents to play by increasing their understanding of the Internet, the role it plays in their kids' lives and the experiences their kids are having online. There is also a need to ensure rules are sufficient and current to keep kids safe online. For parents, a combination of technology and talking openly about issues can help ensure our kids have a positive experience online, and this report shows us where to focus our efforts," said Ibrahim.

The award-winning Norton Online Family service, available free of charge in 25 languages, gives parents insight into their kids' lives online.

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