



CYBER PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Background

As smart device usage continues to [rapidly increase](#) among children, so do the concerns parents have about their children's digital safety and security. In order to gain further insight into how parents perceive numerous mobile and Internet security issues, ESET commissioned a survey that examines where parents stand on the topic and how they handle the associated risks.

Key Data Points and Analysis

With increasing access to devices and the Internet, parents are concerned about what their children do online.

- When asked their top concerns about their child's use of the Internet, parents identified child predators as the highest concern, followed by visiting inappropriate sites and thirdly, sharing too much information about themselves or their family.
 - Child predators (57%)
 - Visiting inappropriate sites (44%)
 - Giving away too much personal information (44%)
 - Hackers/theft of private data (39%)
 - Cyberbullying (38%)
- Parents are most concerned when it comes to children between the ages of 6-14. Concerns such as cyberbullying, exposure to vulgar content and downloading a virus were significantly higher for parents with children in this age range than for those with children outside this age bracket.

While children may be keeping up with the latest social apps, parents are not necessarily doing the same. Facebook was ranked as the most "risky" but this question also generated many comments from parents not knowing many of these social platforms.

- When it came to social networking, parents believe that Facebook presents the most danger, followed by Snapchat and Instagram.
 - Facebook (74%)
 - Snapchat (67%)
 - Instagram (47%)
 - Twitter (36%)
 - Gchat (29%)

Putting it plain and simple, do parents trust their children online?

- There were mixed feelings among parents regarding the trust they have toward their children when it comes to online behavior.
 - 29% said yes, they always trust their child.
 - 61% said sometimes.
 - 10% said they never do.
- Men, more than women, reported trusting their children online all the time (42% men vs. 28% women)

Have parents caught their child using their device inappropriately?

- 17% said yes.
- 11% said no, but they are sure they are doing things the parent would not approve of.
- 72% said no, they have not.

What are the top things parents would like to limit their child from doing online?

- Limit what sites their child visits (80%)
- Filter content they can browse by age (75%)
- See and approve apps they can download (72%)
- Control or approve what he/she purchases (67%)
- Control the amount of screen time (64%)
- Use location feature to see where their child is (56%)

How do parents feel about monitoring what their children do on their mobile device?

- 80% of parents think it's OK to install a parental control app on their child's phone without them knowing.

Do parents use or intend to use monitoring tools to help control and navigate their child's online experience?

- 12% have installed a tool on their child's phone.
- 37% of parents have not installed a parental control app/program, but intend to.
- 45% said that "not knowing which to use" had prevented them from installing one.
- 14% did not know such a thing existed.
- Of those buying a smartphone for their children this holiday season, 80% say they plan to install such an app.

Who do parents feel is responsible for educating children about online safety?

- While almost all agree it is the responsibility of the parent (99%), not all parents discuss online safety with their children. Only 70% reported talking to their children about online safety before or when giving them a new device.
- When asked who is responsible for educating their child, parents indicated:
 - Parents/guardians 99%

- Teachers/school system 58%
- After-school activity leaders 22%
- Technology companies 22%
- Other 1%
- Mothers were more likely to indicate that parents are responsible for cyber security education than fathers.

Parents don't always speak to their child about cyber safety before issuing a device.

- While almost 70% said yes, almost 16% said no, and 15% said sometimes.

METHODOLOGY:

This survey was developed by ESET and executed by Parent Tested Parent Approved (PTPA) through an online survey distributed to its network of over 70,000 parents and/or followers. The survey was distributed through PTPA's various digital mediums including emails, social networking sites and embedded messages on ptpa.com. There were 1,230 total respondents distributed evenly throughout the U.S. and Canada, responding between September 12, 2015 and October 5, 2015.