CyberSmart!

Handling E-mail and IM too!

Download Student Activity Sheet(s) for printout in PDF Format

Overview

Students consider the positive uses of E-mail and IM and identify safety strategies for responsibly managing unsolicited messages.

Objectives

- Describe ways to enjoy E-mail and IM
- Define junk E-mail (spam) and junk IM (spim)
- Identify strategies for responsibly and safely managing unsolicited messages

ISTE® National Technology Standards

- Performance Indicators # 2 and 3

Site Preview

- No Internet site is used in this lesson.

Online Resources

- Visit sites providing background information on E-mail Safety.

Materials

- Activity sheets (2)

Introduce

- Present the following scenario to students. *Kathy loves coming home from school and picking up the mail. She always checks to see if anything has arrived for her. Usually, all the mail is for her parents. Her parents throw most of the mail in the trash, calling it "junk mail." Kathy would be happy to get any mail and doesn't understand what is so "junky."* **Ask:** *What is junk mail?* Guide students to understand that junk mail is unsolicited commercial mail.

  [NOTE: Junk instant messages are as challenging and annoying as junk E-mail, perhaps more so to students who probably IM more then they E-mail. See extend lesson suggestion addressing this.]

Teach 1

- Distribute Activity Sheet 1.
- Have students complete the sheet and share their responses. NOTE: Postpone discussion until students have read and applied the information presented on Activity Sheet 2.

Teach 2

- Distribute Activity Sheet 2 and discuss with students.
- Explain that spam is annoying or upsetting to adults as well as children. Point out that since the purpose of spam mail is to get someone to open the message, the subject is designed to trick you into opening it. Opening the message will automatically tell the sender that you "read" the message and the computer will keep sending you more junk mail. The best strategy is not to open E-mail from addresses you don't recognize.

Teach 3

- Allow students to revisit Activity Sheet 1 and explain how their answers might be changed or enhanced. Guide students to consider the following in their discussion:

  Who the E-mail was from: Charlie may have thought it was from a friend or relative whose E-mail address he did not know.

  Downloading files: Since Charlie was confused about the source of the E-mail, he should not have downloaded the file.

  Telling his parents: Charlie should have told a parent or guardian about the E-mail, especially after he downloaded the file. Tell students that it is never a good idea to keep secret something that makes you uncomfortable. An adult who uses the Internet will understand the problems associated with spam and will know what to do about it.
- Have students explain what they would have done if Charlie had received an IM rather than an E-mail. Guide students to consider that they should never accept a message from a screen name they do not recognize. if they do by accident, they should never click on a link.

Close

- **Ask:** *What are some ways kids can enjoy E-mail and IM?* (They can use E-mail and IM to keep in touch with family, friends, and teachers, or to request homework help with an adult's permission)
- **Ask:** *What is spam?* (unsolicited mass E-mails from companies trying to sell something)
- **Ask:** *What is spim?* (unsolicited mass IM's from companies trying to sell something)
- **Ask:** *What is the safe thing to do if you get an E-mail or IM from a stranger?* (Do not open it; if opened in error, do not click on anything or download any attached file.)
- **Ask:** *What should you do if an E-mail or IM that makes you feel uncomfortable?* (Do not reply; tell a parent or guardian.)

Extend

The following activity can be added for students who completed this lesson in a previous grade.

- Revisit the issues explored in this lesson and apply to Instant Messaging. Remind students that IM is only used with face-to-face friends.

- Have students make posters illustrating safety rules on Activity Sheet 2. Students may address either E-mail or IM or both.
- Extend discussion on E-Mail and IM to include risk of worms and viruses. Explain to students that introducing a worm or virus in their computer is most usually done through clicking on unknown links in E-mail and IM messages; and that they could lose all their stuff on their computer.

© 2008 The CyberSmart Education Company. All Rights Reserved.
Site last updated: routine monthly basis