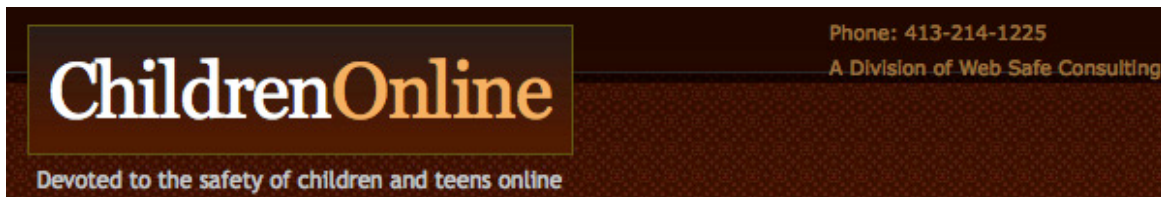


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Social Network Resources for Schools

There are many social media tools that are not "Facebook." Many good examples are listed below, some free, some not. We invite our readers to contact us with their success stories so that we may share them in future newsletters.

There are several important reasons why these social tools are more suitable for classroom use than using Facebook, MySpace, or other social networking site, including:

1. Teachers have much greater control over the access and use of these accounts.
2. By and large, these social

Issue: #49**May 2011****49th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.**

Last week we were invited to testify at a hearing before a committee from the New York legislature on the topic of social networks and children. Marje represented ChildrenOnline.org.



This month's newsletter presents some of the key points from her conversation and presentation at the hearing. We also present a variety of suitable tools to educators for using social media in the classroom.

ChildrenOnline.org is accepting workshop dates for the 2011-2012 academic year. If you are interested in having us conduct student, parent or faculty workshops, please contact us via email or our phone (413-214-1225).

As always we welcome your comments and suggestions.
 Best wishes,
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

Social Media Tools in Education

Social Media sites have exploded in numbers over the last few years. Today there are hundreds of social networking sites as well as chatting ability in most kid's gaming sites. The most popular sites for children now have social media components to

tools are nearly free of ads, marketing exploits or malware tricks.

3. The tools are set up so that teachers moderate content, usually with several different ways to do so.

4. Some of these tools document changes, additions, and history in such a way that teachers have valuable information to assess student contribution and progress.

5. Privacy is much easier to safeguard using these tools.

SUGGESTED SOCIAL TOOLS FOR SCHOOL USE:

Wikispaces.com (a FANTASTIC tool for collaborative work!

[Educator's link.](#))

KidBlog.org

Classroom 2.0

Edmodo.com

Zoomerang.com (Survey tool)

SurveyMonkey.com (Survey tool)

Edu20.org (similar to Moodle)

SymbalooEDU

Ning.com ([Ning sponsor for educators](#))

Collaborize.com

EduBlog.org ([EduBlog Awards](#))

TeacherTube.com

SchoolTube.com

Voicethread.com (a great site for elementary educators)

Google Docs is an outstanding resource for collaborative online work. However, less well known is [Google Moderator](#), a tool to use in real-time lesson participation to gather student feedback.

them. YouTube, Addicting Games, MiniClip and Club Penguin are a few. According to our research of U.S. school children aged 10-18, Facebook is listed as the most popular social networking site. The use of Facebook by younger children has risen dramatically in the past few years.

Percentage of students per grade level with a Facebook account:

2008-2009		2010-2011	
Grade	% on Facebook	Grade	% on Facebook
4	2.3%	4	7.1%
5	1.9%	5	9.1%
6	10.0%	6	25.4%
7	25.3%	7	46.8%
8	60.9%	8	84.8%

*See information in the sidebar about our research data.

Positive Features

Social Media and Social Networking offer opportunities for building connections, strengthening communication and facilitating community building. Schools and organizations have the ability to link students electronically who might have previously been marginalized or isolated. Social networking offers universal connection regardless of sex, age, religion, race, sexuality and economic status (Unless a student does not have access to an Internet-connected computer or smart phone). Children or teens with low social skills or mild forms of Autism may find a pathway to peers that enable stronger social connections and friendships.

Some high school teachers and schools currently use social networking sites such as Facebook as a communication tool. Some teachers have created chat-room groups to extend classroom discussions and to post assignments, tests and quizzes. School clubs and sport teams use Facebook as a tool to disseminate information. Social networks are also being used to foster teacher-parent communication.

Your students can, for example, create a real-time series of questions or ideas during a lesson and then vote on the most valuable ideas or important questions. All of this is easily displayed in the account of the "series" creator. NOTE: The downside to using these collaborative Google tools is that each participant must create a Google Gmail account. For students who's parents don't wish to allow this, a teacher could create accounts for students and hand out passwords which can then be changed after the unit/exercise is done.

In May, 2010

OnlineUniversities.com posted an interesting [list of 100 examples of such educational uses in K-12 and college settings](#). Some of the links no longer work but the webpage still contains many valuable ideas about using social media tools in education.

Visit the [Lecture Tools Blog](#) for using social media in the classroom. Or this article on [Integrating Social Media Into Online Education](#) from Dr. Orlando at Norwich University.

In the fall of 2010, Sara Kessler posted an interesting argument at [Mashable.com](#) with six key points that make the case for using social media in schools. It is worth

Concerns/Challenges

Social Networking sites, such as Facebook, can expose children and teens to many potential risks and difficulties. These risks include bullying, harassment, loss of privacy, identity theft, computer malware (spyware, adware) infections, overexposure of "private information" and addiction. Facebook, for example, defaults new users to privacy settings that are least private and most open to public viewing. Navigating the privacy settings to remain *relatively* "safe" requires vigilance and high-level cognition skills on the part of the user and, as such, are more difficult for younger teens and children.

Fueled by the marketing and financial gain to be found on Social Networking sites, many companies and scam artists set up applications or ads to trick younger users. Facebook, and social networking users in general, are very susceptible to phishing, or attempts to acquire personal/private information such as passwords, user names and banking information through fraudulent means. With underdeveloped cognitive, emotional and behavior skills, children and young teens often make costly decisions to download "free software" or respond to an ad and put their identity, home computer, and private information at risk. For example, a common mistake is putting a cell phone number into a fake ad or survey which results in a monthly charge to a parents' bill. Another is to give permission to rogue apps which steal personal information and infect users accounts and/or computers.

Online, the group most at risk for overexposure and posting of inappropriate material are children and teens. Encouraged to push boundaries, some

reading and drawing your own conclusions.

ChildrenOnline.org Research:

Survey data represent anonymous answers to questions posed to students on paper surveys distributed in classrooms. Data for the 2010-2011 statistics come from 2,576 student Internet surveys distributed to students in grades four through twelve between October 2010 and February 2011. Surveys were conducted amongst independent schools in New York, Connecticut, Virginia, Massachusetts and Florida with 45% of all surveys from New York state students.

Similarly, data for the 2008-2009 statistics comes from 2,749 student Internet surveys similarly distributed amongst independent school students during the 2008-2009 academic year. 88% of students were from New York state schools with the remainder from Massachusetts.

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children and teens often feel compelled to post material that places them at risk for bullying, location awareness or unwanted attention. Younger children and teens are actively turning to Facebook and risk missing the developmental milestones of face-to-face contact that encourage healthy growth and development. Social network risks for bullying, harassment, exclusion, name-calling and other behaviors that can cause emotional harm can be very divisive to friendships and social connections. With emerging decision-making skills, children and teens may not be ready to handle the myriad decisions they face on social networking sites. Brain research has demonstrated that the frontal cortex of the brain, where our decision-making skills are rooted, doesn't fully mature until the mid-twenties. The combination of the lack of developmental maturity on the part of children and teens and the lack of structures in place on social networking sites to protect children and teens creates an often risky, seductive and dangerous culture.

According to a study by TRUSTe released in October, 2010:

68% of teens accept friend requests from people they don't know. (These "friends" might be software bot tricks, strangers who don't have their best interests in mind, prospective employers, admissions counselors or bullies.) 18% of teens have been disciplined or embarrassed due to their activities in social networks.

Facebook's own statistics in 2009 stated approximately 80-85% of their users never change or check their privacy settings. (In order to keep information private, users must check their settings every few months as they are changed several times a year.) Also, a PEW Internet and

INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children Online has a curriculum on Internet

Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.

There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page](#) at ChildrenOnline.org or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)
[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)



American Life Project study from 2009 stated that 38% of 12 year olds are on social networks nation wide.

Our research shows:

2010-2011 Average number of friends per Facebook account per grade level:

Grade	# of Friends	Grade	# of Friends
4	83	8	340
5	55	9	414
6	165	10	561
7	189	11	779
		12	749

*See information in the sidebar about our research data.

There is a small, but growing number of people who are trying to extol the virtues of using social networking sites such as Facebook in schools, including elementary and middle school (grades 7-8), in addition to high school. ChildrenOnline.org believes that it is a mistake to use social networking sites such as Facebook in this way. (See the sidebar article to learn what social media resources we do consider valuable for schools to use!)

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

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