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- Obtain all of your child's passwords and user account names. A good rule of thumb for monitoring their digital world is to monitor it in the same way you monitor their "real" life. When you monitor where they go see who they go with and when. **It's your job as their parent to know what they are doing.**

- Ask your child to take you on a tour of their connected world. Find out the sites they like to visit and have them show you what they do. Three types of sites that kids commonly use are:
    - ➢ IMing (Instant messaging), such as Yahoo, AOL, IM and Messenger
    - ➢ Social Networking Sites, such as Facebook and MySpace
    - ➢ Video Posting, such as YouTube, AOL Video

- Monitor their use of the computer and their cell phones. Monitoring software can be helpful in reporting their habitual use of electronic space and what they do there. **DO NOT buy into the cop out of affording your kids privacy. The electronic choices they make today can have a life-long impact on their lives.**

- Require that all cell phones be charged overnight in a common area of your home. Too many kids continue phone contact throughout the night, disrupting sleep and continuing the drama.

- Periodically check their texts, who they are talking to, and how much time they spend texting and talking. Make a rule that they may not delete information on their phones until you tell them they can or you do so yourself.

- When you monitor their space scrutinize their friends. You should know each and every person on that list. If you don't, have them explain who that person is, and why they are there. Your child should be able to tell you the full name of their "friend", how they met them, the context of their relationship, and how often they interact with them. If they cannot do all of the above, get rid of the friend.
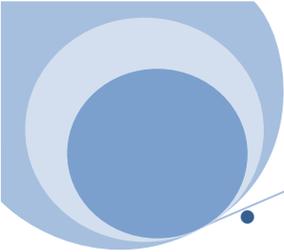
- Have ongoing discussions about cyber-bullying with your child. Remember, over 40% of kids have been cyber-bullied, only 10% have told an adult, and over 50% have sent harmful, hurtful messages to others. This digital world enables good kids to do bad things. Do not underestimate how destructive humiliation is to a child – keep the lines of communication open.

- **Remember this: there is no privacy in the electronic world!** Virtually everything your child does digitally – via computer or cell phone – can be viewed by others. Remind your child, regularly, they have no privacy in this space. Have a rule of thumb that they should not send anything they would not be comfortable with at least thousands of others seeing it. Some of those viewing could be a future college admissions officer, or human resource officer.

- Never, ever allow a computer or TV in your child's bedroom, for any reason. The average kid (8 to 18) spends 7.38 hours per day, 7 days a week, consuming media. When that consumption goes private, in a bedroom, it diminishes your control over that media diet. **It is your job as a parent to know what they are consuming in their media diet, and how much they consume.**

- Ask yourself the following questions:

  - Does your elementary or middle-school child really NEED instant messaging/texting? Do they really NEED to have space on a social networking site? **What will they gain from either of these?** Do they have the necessary maturity and judgment to use both well?
  - Does your elementary or middle-school child really NEED a cell phone, particularly with texting? **What will they gain from this?**
  - When is the technology they have too much? Disconnecting kids from the Internet and their computers is not the answer, but do they need to be connected 24/7? **When does your child have down time from their digital world? When do they unplug? When do they have quality family time with you, where everyone talks to each other?**

Educational Development Services, LLC