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Dear Paul

I hope you are well and managed to have a lovely, relaxing break. As I sit here and type this the sun is beaming through the window, typically the weather did not do this whilst I was on holiday in Scotland!!

A lot has been going on over the last few weeks. It won't surprise you to hear that developments in, and the use of artificial intelligence is front and centre. I suspect AI is going to be a prominent feature in these weekly updates moving forward. At the moment this area is moving so fast it is really difficult to keep up to date with!

I have a few updates for you this week, at the very bottom there is a new service I'm considering which I think many schools will find beneficial, I would really appreciate your thoughts on this one.

Updates

- Safeguarding and Immersive technologies.
- Children using AI to bully others.
- Fake calculator apps.
- For parents - updated supervision features for FB Messenger and Instagram.
- For parents - Discord Family Center.
- Idea - Online safety subscription service.

Safeguarding and Immersive Technologies

The NSPCC have commissioned a new (fairly short) report into safeguarding and immersive technologies (e.g. virtual reality). The purpose of the report is to provide an understanding of some of the concepts in immersive technologies and the potential risks (unpacked in a different report). It's an interesting read if you are new to this sort of area, especially given the fact that immersive technologies are becoming more popular with children and young people. For example do you know what 'futas' and 'lolis' are (I can't explain them in this email).

There are two reports which you may find of interest, the one mentioned above is the key concepts report which you can download [HERE](#), the second is an outline of the risks which you can download [HERE](#).

Children Using AI to Bully Others

Sadly, it had to happen sooner or later. Although reports are currently coming from Australia it stands to reason that this is going to be happening everywhere.

The Australian eSafety Commissioner has called on companies to step up protections around generative AI which is being used by children to bully others by creating sexualised images of their peers. Although the report refers to 'bullying' I would say it is much more than this. If the person being depicted is a child (AI generated or not) then it is illegal (in the UK).

A small number of young people may see this as harmless fun, a laugh, but the trauma to the victim and the consequences to the perpetrator could be significant.

You can read more in [THIS](#) news report.

Fake Calculator Apps

Fake calculator apps, or what I prefer to call vault apps, are apps on a device that look like one thing (e.g. a calculator) but are actually something else. They have been around for many years with the calculator app being the most popular as it looks like just an ordinary calculator. The difference here is that you can enter a code and you will be presented with data that you have hidden, e.g. images and videos.

On occasion you may need to search a device, I have to quite often to search for illegal data. It's pretty rare to come across a vault app but unless you know what they are you won't know what to look for.

There's a good explanation from Qustudio [HERE](#) along with a few examples [HERE](#).

For Parents - Updated Supervision Features for FB Messenger and Instagram

In June 2023 Meta rolled out some new parental features for FB Messenger and Instagram. As of 30th August these updates are now available globally.

Specific updates for Messenger:

- View how much time the child spends on the app.
- Updates on their contact list.
- Notification if the child reports someone.
- View who can message their child.
- View who can see their child's stories.

Specific updates for Instagram:

- Before being able to message someone who doesn't follow them, people must now send a text only invite to connect (in other words, no more unwanted explicit photos from people you don't follow). No further interaction can take place unless the recipient accepts the invite.

In all these are quite positive steps, there is further information [HERE](#).

For Parents - Discord Family Center

Discord used to be popular with gamers, now it's hugely popular amongst non-gamers too. Historically Discord has been very lax regarding features that are available for parents to help keep their children safe, but this has recently changed, albeit the changes are a minuscule step in the right direction, at least it's something.

Essentially, like many other apps, Discord now has a Family Center. Once set up parents can see:

- What servers (chat rooms) their children have joined or participated in.
- Everyone they've messaged.
- New users they've connected with.

You can read more about these functions and limitations [HERE](#), and [THIS](#) page will show parents how to set up Family Center.

Idea - Online Safety Subscription Service

This is something I have been mulling over for some time and I would be really grateful for your thoughts, I'm not going to do it if the demand isn't there.

Time is precious, budgets are a constant challenge. From an all-staff and parents perspective keeping up to date with online safety is challenging. I hope this weekly update helps in some way, but it is free and therefore limited. Furthermore I spend hundreds of hours on the road travelling to schools nationally and this is not time well spent (as well as environmentally damaging).

Therefore my idea is to help with all of this in a cost-effective way by creating a tiered annual subscription model, for example:

- Tier 1 - a monthly (term time) video lasting no more than 10 minutes for all staff with age-relevant information and updates.
- Tier 2 - as above, plus a monthly (term time) newsletter for all parents which you send out via your own channels (e.g. email, Dojo etc.).
- Tier 3 - as above plus a full 1-hour training video for staff and governors each September plus a series of short videos for parents (I already do these but they would be embedded into the subscription model).
 - Tier 3.5 - as per tier 3 but instead of videos the staff/parents training would be via a webinar on a date that suits you.

I would be really grateful for your thoughts, I can't give costs right now but I can guarantee that it will be very cost effective, much less than a physical visit to your school.

Online Safety Training (staff, parents and students)

As well as in-school training (staff, students, parents) and virtual (Zoom/Teams) I also offer cost-effective pre-recorded video training as follows (each purchase includes a 12 month licence to use as many times as you wish within your setting):

STAFF INSET

There is a primary version plus a secondary/college version, the most recent videos were updated and re-recorded at the end of August 2023 to make sure they're right up to date. They take staff through the risk basics (content, contact, conduct and commerce), the spaces that children occupy online (games, YouTube and social media) plus the latest risks and issues with supporting advice and guidance. The video can be streamed or downloaded to the school network.

If you would like to see a sampler video you can access the 4-minute introduction [HERE](#).

Cost: £95.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

PARENTS

The days of parents online safety evenings were often a struggle to get parents to attend, so I have created a series of 7 short videos for parents. On purchase, I will send you a MS Word document. This document contains the text, supporting links and video links for 7 emails (or other school communication) which you just need to copy, paste and send out to parents at a frequency of your choice (e.g. one a week). You are also welcome to add your own text.

Cost: £149.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

GOVERNORS/TRUSTEES

This video, recorded in Aug 2023, is similar to the staff video but from a governance context. Lasting for just over an hour it covers what online safety means, the risk categories, the online lives of children/young people, followed by a few simple questions that governors can consider with advice and guidance.

Cost: £95.00 plus VAT (cost per school, not per person) for a 12 month licence. For Multi-Academy Trusts

or if purchasing for a number of schools, discounts are available. Just email me and let me know how many schools you would like to purchase for.

SECONDARY STUDENTS

This is a series of 10 videos, each of which are short (between 8 and 12 minutes) covering a range of different topics. These are ideal for showing in assembly to promote further classroom discussion/debate or within the classroom to go deeper into the topic. You will be able to download these videos for future use, or even use for virtual learning by sharing the link with students. The cost is £179 (plus VAT) for all the videos, not each. Full details and a sample video can be found [HERE](#).

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