

# Internet Safety – Technical Tips

This document contains some technical tips around safe use of the Internet in the home and are intended as an accompaniment to the recent Internet Safety talk held at the school. The document describes some simple and free technical tips that you can use to create a safer environment for Internet activity and help to protect your computer from unwanted intrusion.

The tips are divided into two categories, as follows:

- Tips for Creating a Safe Internet Surfing Environment
  - Google and YouTube safe search mode
  - Internet filtering services – OpenDNS, Microsoft Family Safety
  - Social networking sites – “Friend” your children – do it now!
  - Account setting – parental controls
  
- Tips for Configuring Your Computer for Safe and Secure Operation
  - Non-administrative user accounts for family members
  - Windows (and other) updates
  - Microsoft Security Essentials
  - Risks associated with music and movie downloads – be aware of how your computer is being used!

## Tips for Creating a Safe Internet Surfing Environment

### Google and YouTube Safe Mode

Google and YouTube are the entry point to the Internet. Search engines catalogue absolutely everything that is on the Internet, good and bad. Google and YouTube provide a safe access mode to hide search results that are deemed inappropriate or potentially offensive.

See the following two videos to see how to enable Safe Mode:

YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWO5f7IsKY8>

Google - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4s-uo1CoUw>

The following are some caveats:

- The filters have a US interpretation of what could be deemed inappropriate. Items of a sexual nature will be blocked. However, it seems that violence is much more acceptable.
- You need to enable Safe Mode for each Web browser on your computer (Internet Explorer, FireFox, Chrome, etc). If someone installs a new browser, they will bypass the Safe Mode. To

prevent anyone other than you from installing new web browsers, you can see up different user accounts (see page 3).

- You need to create either a Google or a YouTube account to lock the settings. This is straightforward and free.
- Filtering can have side effects. For example, a search filter will block 'Naked Lunch' (the novel) as well 'naked girls' (the teenage boys hot topic).
- The filters are not 100% effective.

## Internet Filtering Services

There are many products that provide Internet filtering. They maintain categorised lists of websites and block access to inappropriate categories (adult, etc).

Some free options are:

- Microsoft Family Safety – <http://explore.live.com/windows-live-family-safety>
- OpenDNS - <http://www.opendns.com/home>

## Social Networking Sites

While many sites such as "Moshi Monsters" and "Club Penguin" first attract children with the games they offer, they also have a social networking dimension. Users can friend other users and chat to other users. Ensure that you regularly check the friends they have made. All of these sites have Parental Controls which allow you to control how much personal information is displayed (ideally none) and if friend requests can be received.

With sites like Facebook, you could insist that your child friends you. Simple to do when children are younger, but more difficult as they reach teenage years.

## Account Setting – Parental Controls

Microsoft supports parental controls that allow you to set specific restrictions on certain accounts on the computer, such as setting time limits and specifying which programs can be run.

For more information, see:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/help/videos/using-parental-controls>

## Configuring Your Computer for Safe and Secure Operation

These tips may help prevent your computer from being compromised by viruses and malware.

### Create Separate Accounts for Your Children

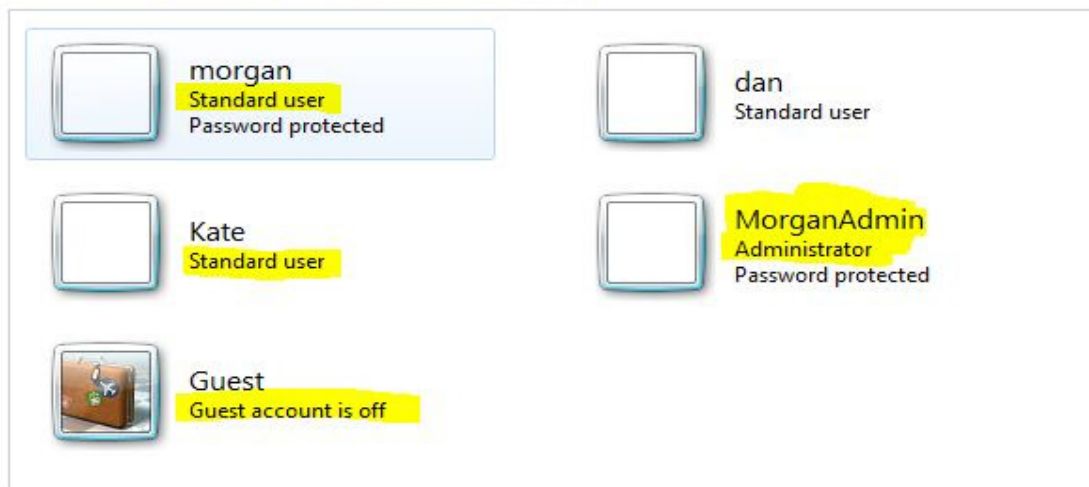
There are different types of accounts on your computer; administrator accounts and standard user accounts. Administrative accounts allow the user complete control of the computer, to install and delete software and make configuration changes. A lot of home computers are set up so that the administrator account is used on a daily basis. One of the disadvantages of this is that any malware (eg. a virus in an email attachment) that you come across can install itself on your machine, as installing software requires administrator privileges. If you or your children are using a standard user account, this cannot happen.

To create a standard account, go to:

- **Start -> Control Panel -> User Accounts**

A screen similar to the following will be displayed:

Choose the account you would like to change



[Create a new account](#)

[What is a user account?](#)

For more information, see:

<http://www.mywindowsclub.com/resources/4031-How-add-new-user-account-Windows.aspx>

## Enable Windows (and Other) Software Updates

Your Windows operating system and many applications such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash, and so on, all have mechanisms to notify you when new versions of the software are available. Updates can add new features or more importantly fix serious security vulnerabilities in the products. Its good practice to accept all software updates.

You should configure your computer to automatically download and install all Windows Updates. For more information, see:

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/help/windows-update>

## Microsoft Security Essentials

Microsoft Security Essentials provides you with free antivirus and anti-malware (spyware etc.) software. This is a fully-featured antivirus and anti-malware program. Download and install it.

For more information, see:

[http://www.microsoft.com/en-ie/security\\_essentials/default.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/en-ie/security_essentials/default.aspx)

## Risks Associated With Music and Movie Downloads

Finally, a question of risk. You'll hear about people getting free access to music and movies, downloading episodes of TV shows and movies for free, often before they are shown on TV or available for rent. Often these are downloaded illegally using software such as Peer 2 Peer (p2p), BitTorrent, or eDonkey. This presents at least two risks to you and your computer and your computer:

### 1. Risk of Copyright Infringement

Movies and music are generally all copyrighted (that's how the studios make their money). Downloading copyrighted material without paying for it is generally an offence and the rights holders can pursue anyone who they think is downloading illegally. There are various ways that illegal downloading can be monitored. If you're connected to the Internet using Eircom, they operate a three strikes policy. If you violate the terms of copyright agreements three times, you'll be disconnected. You could also face fines and so on.

### 2. Risk of Virus Infection

Some P2P networks, for example eDonkey, are riddled with malware, posing as downloads. You expect to get a PC game, but you get a virus instead. Engaging with these networks is another route to having your computer infected or taken over.

So, the important thing is to be aware of how your computer is being used.