Five tips for staying safe on Minecraft

In just a few years Minecraft has become one of the world's most popular video games, especially with young children. Minecraft is rated 7 by PEGI and is generally appropriate for kids – it's often compared to virtual Lego – but as always, there are some basic safety tips to keep in mind. Here's a list of five simple ways to help young children enjoy Minecraft safely.

1. **Use single player or an age-appropriate server.** You can play Minecraft either in single player (by yourself) or multiplayer mode. In multiplayer, users play together in a virtual world and can use the chat function to communicate. If your child is using multiplayer, consider creating your own private server for this world or searching for an appropriate option online – there are lots with strict moderation and rules about profanity and behaviour.

2. **Remind your child to be careful about sharing personal information.** Multiplayer provides great opportunities for collaboration and teamwork, but if your child is playing on a server with other users, it's worth reminding them to be careful about chatting to people they don't know offline.

3. **Report inappropriate behaviour to a server operator.** You can't report users directly to Minecraft, but most servers have operators (or moderators) who can warn or ban anyone who breaks the rules. If someone is making your child uncomfortable they can contact the server's operator.

4. **Look for family friendly Minecraft YouTube channels.** Lots of Minecraft players watch fan-created YouTube videos. They're the site's most popular gaming content, with 3.9 billion views in March 2015 alone. The most common issue with these videos is profanity, but there are lots of channels that are appropriate for all ages. You can help your child find appropriate options (like Stampy and SuperKevinCraft) and pre-screen the videos if you're worried.

5. **Turn off monsters.** Animals and monsters in Minecraft are called mobs. Some are hostile and will attack players under certain circumstances. They're not very realistic, but they might scare young children. You can turn off monsters either by playing in creative mode or by setting the difficulty level to 'peaceful' when you are in survival mode.

Tips for responding to online porn

A lot of the pornography online is extreme and upsetting, featuring violence and humiliation and blurring important boundaries, like the difference between consent and coercion, or adults and children. There's not enough evidence yet to say what effect watching porn has on young people – but some experts worry about what it might mean for their relationships, confidence and the way they treat each other. Awkward as conversations about porn might be, it's not a subject parents can ignore. Here are our five top tips for dealing with online porn.

1. Use parental controls from your internet and phone service providers and on your child's devices to limit their access.

2. Make sure your children know what to do if they come across something worrying online: some children see porn accidentally, or look for it out of curiosity but are then upset by what they find.

3. Talk about sex and relationships in general – young people may seek out porn if they don't know where to turn for reliable information about sex. You can also point them towards sex education resources just for young people, like Brook (https://www.brook.org.uk/).

4. As a source of information about sex and relationships, porn could be misleading. Ask your child what they think makes a healthy relationship – is this compatible with what they see in their favourite shows, games and films? With what they know about porn?

5. The porn industry can't make money from sex that's equal, intimate and respectful – they use extreme content to make a profit. Try making porn part of a broader conversation about living in a consumer culture and the importance of thinking critically about the messages we get via the media, including from the porn industry.

You can find more information about online porn and how parents can respond on Parent Info, a new service from CEOP and The Parent Zone: http://parentinfo.org/articles/pornography/all.

Parenting in the digital age
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