

This video will talk about the importance of encouraging children and young people to think before they post. Online communication is amazing and brings huge benefits, but it is easy for an online comment to be misinterpreted by others. A photo which is put online has no context around it and again can be misunderstood. A good message for younger children is that they should think before they post. Would they be happy for their teacher, their grandparent or someone that they don't know to see the image or the comment that they have made? If the answer is no, then perhaps they shouldn't be saying or posting it online either.

Finding ways to get these messages across can be difficult. Children are often very good at telling an adult how they would behave when they are online, but whether they actually translate this into changing their behaviours is a different question altogether!

There is an excellent short video which is entitled think before you post which considers the impact of posting content without careful consideration. Research shows that adults as well as children will often say and do things online that they wouldn't dream of saying or doing in a face to face situation. We lose our inhibitions when we use the internet and the video looks at what it would be like if we did some of the things we do on the internet in the "real" world.

There is also a very simple yet effective activity which shows children about the importance of what they share online.

Ask the children to create an "all about me" page on a large sheet of paper. Ask them to include some personal information – their school, or their address, date of birth etc. etc. Once they have spent time creating this page, tell them they are now going to make copies and hand them out to people at the school gate or in the local town. Pupils are usually not happy about having to do this but it means that a conversation can then take place about the amount and type of content that they will share when they go online – which is often much more personal than the things they may have put onto their written profile!

Another superb resource is a book from Childnet (part of the UK Safer Internet Centre) called Digiduck's Big Decision

The book is available online in English and Spanish and is perfect for getting the messages about posting content online across to younger children.