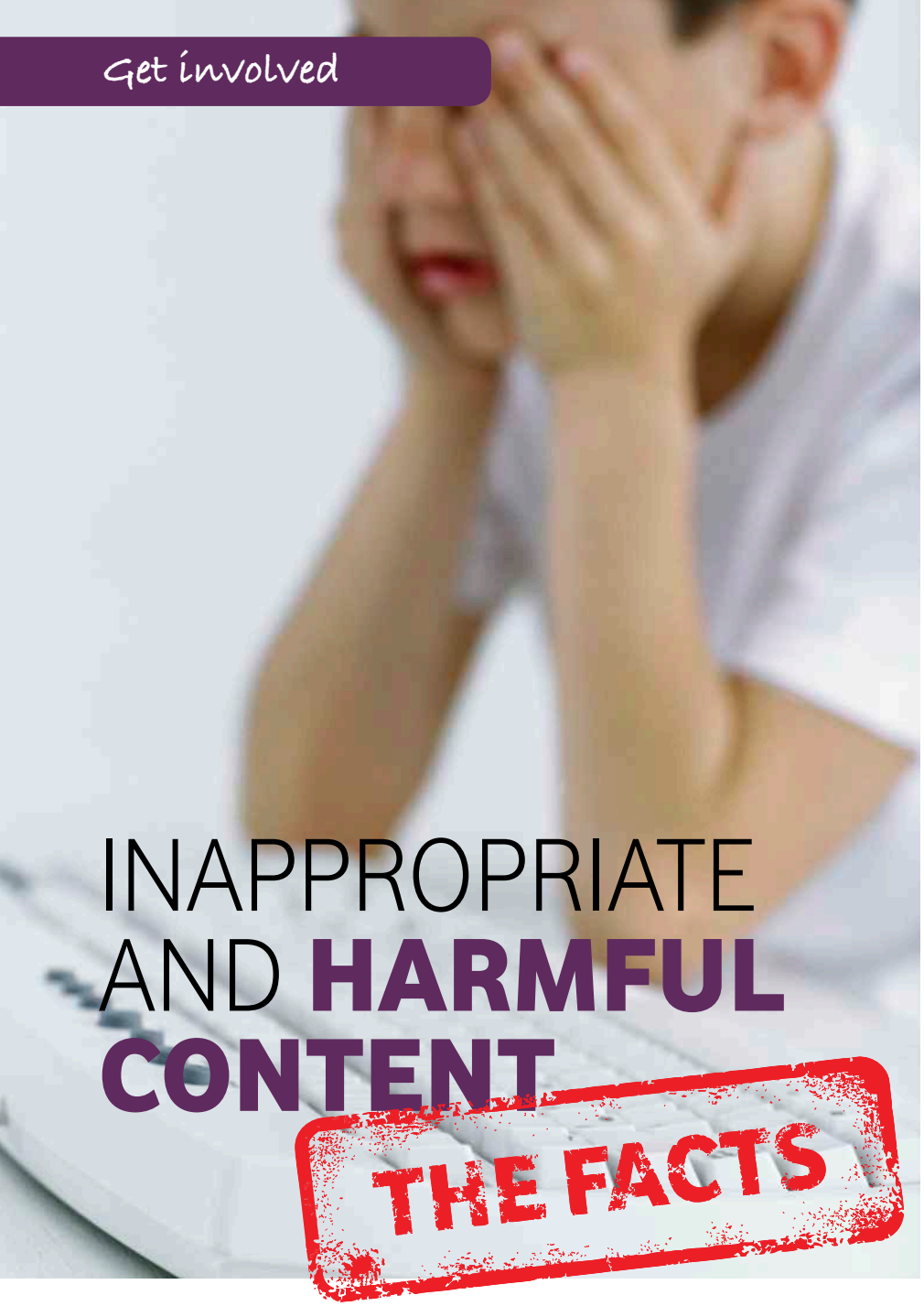


INAPPROPRIATE AND HARMFUL CONTENT

THE FACTS

Just as your children might view unsuitable content on TV, at the cinema or in magazines, so might they online. **Digital Parenting** finds out how you can minimise the risks.

What kind of online content could be considered inappropriate or harmful for young people?

- **Violence**
- **Pornography**
- **Gambling**
- **Adult chat rooms**
- **Promotion of harmful behaviours (e.g. eating disorders and reckless driving)**
- **Advertisements for adult products/services**

How could they come across this content?

Often, young people come across inappropriate or potentially harmful content inadvertently via a search engine, by clicking on a link or pop-up, opening an email attachment or mistyping a website address. Friends might post offensive messages on their social networking profile, send them inappropriate photos or videos via text or Bluetooth or persuade them to take part in an online or console-based game that is meant for adults.

In some cases - especially among older teens - they might deliberately seek out inappropriate materials and share them with their friends. According to EU Kids Online, a major study of internet use among young people in Europe: "Boys appear more likely to seek out offensive or violent content, to access pornographic content or be sent links to pornographic websites; girls appear more likely to be upset by offensive, violent and pornographic material..."

66% of European teenagers state that their parents do nothing to limit or control their internet use

Source: Microsoft®, February 2010.

What are service providers and other organisations doing to protect younger internet users?

Many of the leading internet, mobile and games providers offer Parental Controls that help parents to block access to 18-rated content. Plus, Google provides a SafeSearch option, YouTube™ has a Safety Mode and many video games are rated by age. Social networking services like Facebook® and mobile services like Vodafone 360 also have codes of conduct and community guidelines that do not allow inappropriate content, such as obscene images or offensive messages, to be posted by their members. If someone makes a complaint, many providers will take action, such as taking down inappropriate content and suspending members.

YouTube™ Safety Mode

www.youtube.com

Video-sharing website YouTube™ launched its Safety Mode in early 2010. It's an opt-in setting that helps screen out potentially objectionable content that parents might prefer their children not to see (e.g. a news video that contains graphic violence). To opt in, just click on the link at the bottom left of any video page on YouTube™.
You can even lock Safety Mode on your browser if you have a YouTube™ password.

Q&A WITH GOOGLE
www.google.com

Digital Parenting puts some of your questions to **Laura Scott, Communications & Public Affairs Manager** at **Google**

Q What are the potential challenges and risks when children and teenagers search the internet?

A In many ways, using the internet is similar to finding your way around the real world - there are parts of the offline world where you wouldn't let your kids go unsupervised and encouraged to explore everything. Yet it's not always possible to monitor your child's online activity. There are tools, like Parental Controls on many sites and filters like Google's SafeSearch™, that help you manage what content your children see. As they get older, they need to know how to use the internet when they're on their own. And as parents, that's about equipping our kids with the skills they need to navigate online safely and responsibly, just like in real life.

Q What advice would you give parents about inappropriate content?

A If you're concerned that your child might be accessing inappropriate content, talk to them. It might be a difficult subject to broach but being open, honest and approachable will make it easier for them to discuss their feelings and experiences. Get to know where your children go online. If you have younger children, use the internet with them. For older children, you could talk about what kinds of sites they like to visit and what is and isn't appropriate for your family. Remember, a lot of websites like YouTube™ and social networking sites are not for children under 13. You can also check where your kids have been by looking at the history in your browser menu.

Q What are the benefits of Google SafeSearch™ for young people?

A SafeSearch screens sites that contain sexually explicit content and removes them from your search results. While no filter is 100% accurate, SafeSearch helps you avoid content you may prefer not to see or would rather your children did not stumble across.

Q Is SafeSearch easy to set up?

A Yes. By default, Moderate SafeSearch is turned on, which keeps explicit images out of Web and image search results. If you prefer, you can change your setting to Strict filtering to filter explicit text as well as images. To enable the lock, select "Settings" on the Google homepage and choose "Search Settings".

- Scroll down to SafeSearch Filtering and click "Lock SafeSearch"
- You will be required to sign in
- You will be asked to "Lock SafeSearch Filtering" - this will set SafeSearch filtering to strict
- The spinning icon indicates that SafeSearch is being set to strict and locked across Google domains

Even from across the room, the coloured balls give parents and teachers a clear visual cue that SafeSearch is still locked. And if you don't see them, it's quick and easy to verify and re-lock SafeSearch.

Visit the **Google Family Safety Centre** at **www.google.co.uk/familysafety/**

For more advice about inappropriate or harmful content, go to www.vodafone.com/parents/inappropriate

TAKE ACTION

1 JUST AS YOU RELY on TV watersheds and film ratings to help protect your child from unsuitable content in other media, make the most of online tools like Parental Controls and SafeSearch - but remember that they might not be 100% effective and they aren't a substitute for parental supervision

2 WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN, agree which websites they can use; with teens, discuss what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Pay special attention to search engines as they're often the first port of call for young internet users

3 DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE of age limits on video-sharing websites (e.g. YouTube™ is 13+) - they're there to help protect younger children from unsuitable content

4 EXPLAIN WHY they shouldn't click on links or open email attachments sent by people they don't know or respond to surveys or questionnaires

5 MAKE SURE they know they can talk to you about anything in their digital world that worries them at any time and reassure them that you won't take away their internet access, mobile or games console

6 IF YOU'RE CONCERNED that something your child has seen online is inappropriate, report it to your internet, mobile or games provider (go to the 'Help' or 'Safety' areas on their website to find out how). If you think it could be illegal, report it to the relevant INHOPE hotline in your country too

HOW TO...
SET UP GOOGLE SAFESEARCH™

Searching online is a popular activity among young people. Whether they're looking for information to support their hobbies and interests, researching their homework or simply trying to find the answer to a question that's been niggling them, Google is often their first port of call.

As a parent, you need to be aware that your son or daughter might come across inappropriate content during their online search - even if they're searching on a seemingly harmless keyword or subject.

The good news is that Google offers a SafeSearch feature, which helps you to keep adult content out of search results. SafeSearch screens websites that contain sexually-explicit content and removes them from your search results. Whilst no filter is 100% accurate, SafeSearch helps your children to avoid inappropriate content online.

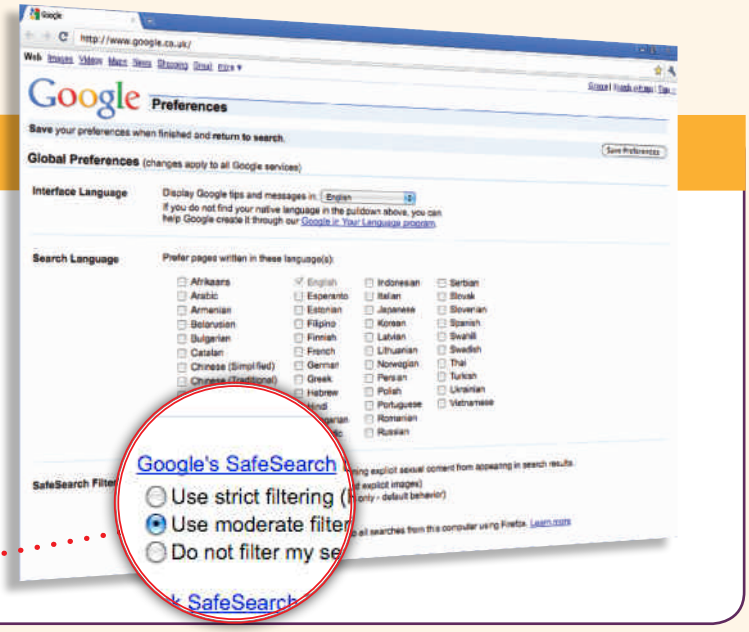
Here's how you can modify your computer's search settings and set up Google SafeSearch™:

STEP 1

Go to **www.google.com** and click on **'Search settings'** under the settings link at the top right of the page.

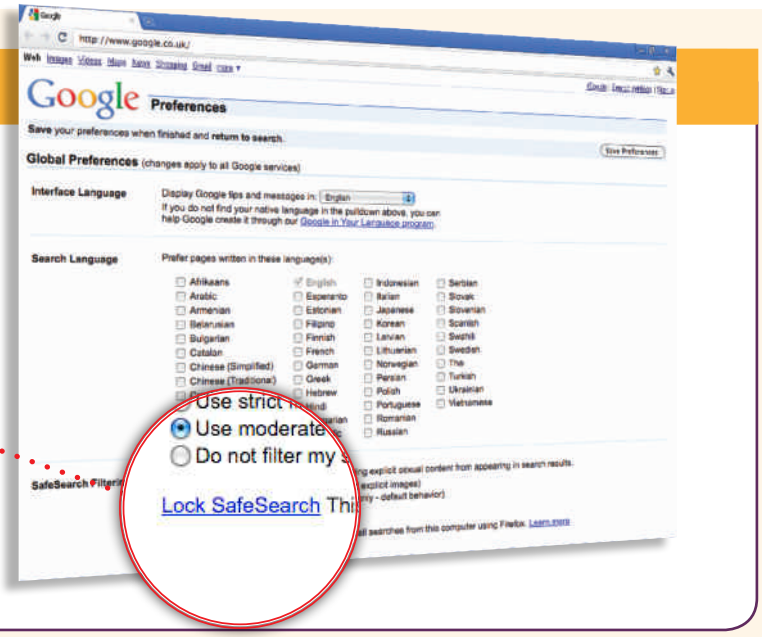
STEP 2

Go to the third section on the **'Search settings'** page, called **'SafeSearch Filtering'** and choose the level of filter you would like activated on your family's computer. **'Strict filtering'** filters both explicit text and explicit images whilst **'Moderate filtering'** filters explicit images only (moderate is the default filter setting on Google).



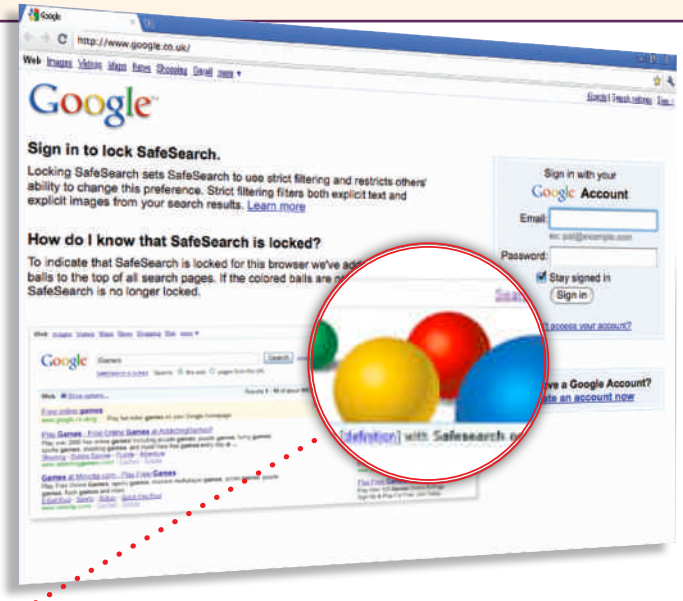
STEP 3

If you have a Google account, you can lock SafeSearch on your family's computer so that **'strict filtering'** is always in place and no-one except you can change the settings. Simply click on **'Lock SafeSearch'** on this page.



If you're not already signed in to your Google account, you'll be asked to sign in. Once you're signed in, click **'Lock SafeSearch'**. It might take a moment for the filters to be applied to all Google domains, then you'll see a confirmation page once the lock is engaged. Please note, if you have more than one browser such as Google Chrome, Internet Explorer or Safari on your computer or if your family computer has more than one user profile, you'll need to set the lock on each one.

When SafeSearch is locked in place, you'll see a set of coloured balls at the top of all search pages. If the coloured balls aren't there, SafeSearch is no longer locked.



Please note, Google does its best to keep SafeSearch as up-to-date and comprehensive as possible, but inappropriate sites do sometimes get through. If you have SafeSearch activated on your computer and still find offensive content in your results, visit Google's Web page removal request page to let them know about the site or image you found.

Google™

www.google.com