

# “SAFER INTERNET DAY”

The Second Day, of the Second Week of the Second Month...February 8, 2011.

As our children grow up in the presence of the Internet, computer skills have become as fundamental as learning to swim or ride a bike. In fact, a recent survey showed that more small children know how to play a computer game than ride a bike, and more small children can use an application on a smartphone than can tie their own shoelaces. While it's cute to see our little ones master technology, the Internet has opened up a whole new set of life skills that we must also equip them with. Once they're old enough for their own Facebook account or instant messaging ID, children need to know the boundaries for keeping their information private and what to do if they are being harassed online.

The European Union has made an investment in its children through supporting the INSAFE co-operation network (<http://www.saferinternet.org>), which exists to empower citizens to use the internet, as well as other online technologies, positively, safely and effectively.

On the second day of the second week of the second month of the year, participating INSAFE countries observe 'Safer Internet Day', with the 2011 date falling on Tuesday 8 February. This day highlights programs and events to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, especially amongst children and young people across the world. Safer Internet Day was launch in 2007 and last year 500 events were held across 65 countries. Events include schools running age-appropriate internet safety lessons, webinars, radio broadcasts and a Young People's Symposium (where 40 UK teens will add their thoughts on how to create effective educational campaigns). To find out about activities in your country visit <http://www.sidfair.org>

This year's theme is "It's more than a game, it's your life" which aims to address how the virtual world of gaming and social networking impacts the real lives of our youths. Though young people think they can hide behind their keyboards, the impact of these online interactions leaves a very real, emotional imprint.

Computer Troubleshooters encourages you to participate in a Safer Internet Day event. Ask if your local school is part of the program or even just make a point to sit down with your child and talk to them about the internet. And as we've seen adults fall prey to email scams, online harassment and fraud, children aren't the only ones who may have little internet experience and could benefit from some cyber safety tips. If you have any questions about online safety, cyber-bullying or any other technology needs, call your local Computer Troubleshooter.

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