

## **EXPLORING THE POSSIBLE DANGER OF INTERNET**

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### **Abstract**

If you, as parents are given questions about what you are most worried about when your children play the internet. What would be your answer? Your answer may be about concern about the proliferation of pornographic content and the possibility of your child being involved in cyberbullying behavior. Next question, are only the two themes above that can endanger our children while exploring the cyberspace? This article aims to expose the various possible dangers on the internet that are actually being enjoyed by our children, that we as their parents should aware. There are many possible dangers that exist on the internet that should be able to be overcome by parents, educational institutions and society in general. To anticipate the occurrence of these dangerous things in our children, the first step that must be taken is to identify the various possible dangers faced by our children. After that we as parents can take the next wise step, so that our children can still enjoy the various benefits offered by the internet today.

**Keywords:** Internet, Pornography, Cyberbullying, Possible Dangers

### **INTRODUCTION**

Today, the internet is inevitable. Children, toddlers, teenagers, adults are using it. In fact, internet use by children and teenagers increase (Farrukh & Sadwick, 2014). The report said that in 2005, 91% of children already had access to the internet and online material (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009). Talking about the internet means that we should consider about the world without limit and full of anonymity. Everyone could be anyone. Many websites contain harmful materials, unappropriated pictures and so on. Internet or the digital world would bring effect to children like addicted to the internet or being lazy to socialize with friends or a member of the family.

Farrukh & Sadwick (2014) said providing a safe digital environment require an in-depth understanding of the types and prevalence on the online risk that young internet users face. Each stage of development has its own milestone, including when we talk about the digital world or the internet. The danger that faced by toddler will be different from what the teenager faces, and so on (Kidron & Rudkin, 2017). This article aims to expose the possible dangers on the internet, that every parent should aware of based on literature review.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The common topics that emerge in the literature on the dangers of the internet would be as the following.

#### **Exposure to Sexually Explicit Material**

According to Whitaker & Bushman (2009), two most common ways in which children can be exposed to sexually explicit material are through personal sexual solicitation

and through viewing pornographic material. Sexual solicitation is defined as online communication wherein one person persuades another to talk or discuss sex or engage in sexual activity through the internet. This activity can potentially happen not just through the chat room or social media, but also happen in communicating through online video games. As we know today online games also providing the platform to chat or communicate in their games.

Pornographic material can appear from various spam on various social media platforms such as Facebook, link on Whatsapp etc. In Indonesia (according to Tempo, 2018), starting August 10, 2018, all content containing pornographic elements or material will no longer be accessible through national internet service providers along with the application of safe mode on search engines. Such good news for all parents.

### **Protection of Identity**

There will be many of risks of the internet can be reduced or mitigated if young people know how to keep their personal information online. We often read about events that happened to them, where they experienced unpleasant events after they met new people they knew online. Research has shown that young people seem to view the online and offline world as one world, it's different with adults who have the ability to view the online and offline as two different types of the world. Another problem is, some young people do believe that the information they share is only for their inner circle. Some of them understand that they need to protect their privacy, but they do not fully understand that in the digital world everything can spread without their permission (Farrukh & Sadwick, 2014). So, parents should make sure their children know how to avoid sharing personal or private information in their online activity, such as personal feeling about other people or activities they performed because this kind of information can be potentially used by others to locate them or to hurt (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009).

### **Cyber-Bullying**

Currently cyberbullying has become an iceberg phenomenon, Grigonis (2017) found that cyberbullying is currently the most common on Instagram social media platforms which is as much as 42%, followed by Facebook by 47%, Snapchat then with 37%. This figure appears based on research conducted by Ditch the Label, one of the largest anti-bullying organizations involving 10,000 teenage respondents in the UK. Pew Research Center in 2018 released a report that stated 59% of US teens have been bullied or harassed online. The report said it's their major problem for people of their age and most of them also think that teachers, social media companies and politicians are failing at addressing this issue.

Whitaker & Bushman (2009) defined cyberbullying as an aggressive, intentional or repetitive act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic form against specific individual or group. Willard (2007) states that cyberbullying is the act of sending or uploading harmful material or carrying out social aggression through the internet and other technologies. Cyberbullying can be posted on personal websites, blogs, and websites. Cyberbullying text messages can be disseminated via e-mail, online groups, chatting, instant messaging and text messages or digital picture messages through devices.

Willard (2007) divide cyberbullying in 7 types: harassment, exclusion, impersonation, denigration, outing, and trickery, flaming and cyberstalking.

- a. Harassment is repeated, ongoing sending of offensive messages to an individual/group target through personal communication channels. Harassment includes the concept of repetition and multiple offensive messages
- b. Exclusion is defined as the designation of who is a member of the in-group and who the outcast is. The boundaries of who is the in-group members and outcast would make a significant effect on young people's lives. Exclusion may occur in the online gaming environment, group blogging, or instant messaging by ignoring or excluding someone from the buddy list of the group.
- c. Impersonation is related to the ability to impersonate the target and post the material that reflects badly on the target or interferes with the target's friendship. Impersonation may occur in the targets personal page, profile, blog or through personal communication.
- d. Denigration is defined as a speech about a target that would be harmful, untrue, or cruel to the target. The purpose through denigration is to interfere with the friendship or to damage the reputation of the targets. The speech may be posted online or sent to others.
- e. Outing and Trickery are related to publicly posting, sending, or forwarding personal communication or images that contain intimate personal information or something that potentially could be embarrassing for the target.
- f. Flaming is defined as heated, the short-lived argument that occurs between two or more protagonist, including offensive, rude, and vulgar language, insults and sometimes could be threats. In a longer period of time, the message would be called "flame-war".
- g. Cyberstalking is defined as repeated sending of harmful messages which include threats of harm, which are highly intimidating or extremely offensive or involve extortion.

### **Inappropriate and Harmful Content**

As we know the internet offers the chance to explore without limit. And as parents, we do need to know that not all content on the internet broke into age or developmentally appropriate areas. Without our supervision and guidance, our loved ones can be accidentally or purposely found content that is disturbing, harm, violent, explicit or inappropriate. The inappropriate material could be violent, aggressive online content including images and description associated with war or other atrocities, domestic abuse and violence, cruelty to animals, and material that promotes racial, religious, social hatred (Donoso, 2014),

### **Internet Addiction**

Along with the increasing use of the internet by children, parents' attention to this has also increased. Parents realize that children are increasingly tied to the internet, with all the advantages offered. This concern is due to the increasing of time their children spent in front of the screen. Many definitions of internet addictions were released, but all come with common symptoms: a psychological dependence on being online, interference with other responsibilities, disruption of offline social relationship and withdrawal when internet use is limited (Whitaker & Bushman, 2009).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Today, along with the development of the internet, there is a significant increase in the number of internet users in childhood, and teenagers. As parents, we raised in different era with our children, so we are facing the difference challenge in raising our loved ones nowadays. Our children goes online and connected to the world, it means they are facing every challenges that being online can bring. The challenge will be from A to Z and so on, from inappropriate or harmful content, cyberbullying, addiction to internet, until their personal information goes public.

We have to realize that we can do almost everything with the internet, but as thing the internet also has two side. Positive and negative. Just like the other things in the world. Exposure to sexually explicit material, protection of identity, cyber-bullying, inappropriate and harmful content, and internet addiction is just a few of the internet problem that we have to face today. This topic will take us, parents to various other problems, which may not have been identified in this paper and this problem will continue to grow over time.

Internet is a need today, whether you are children, or adults. Now, as the internet developed in the past few years, the line between games and social media has blurred due to many games including online content, options to share personal information and interact with other players in the online competition. Our children are not just playing games, they also make interactions with the people around the world. This kind of interactions will bring a lot of impact to them, as human being.

Each stage of development has its own milestone, one of the simplest ways for parents to minimize the impact of the internet's danger is their willing to understand what is happening, and what our children's need at each stage of development. David Emm, one of senior security researcher at internet security company Kaspersky Lab, suggested that parents should start discussions about security in using the internet as early as possible (Dredge, 2014). As parents, we are the closest person to our child who understands how to convey information to them.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Internet is another world, digital world that we as parents should live side by side. A lot of positive things that we can find on the internet that will improve us to be a better human being. But as things, the internet also comes with its own negative side, that is not just about pornographic and cyberbullying. The two topics will suddenly pop up in our head when we talk about the danger of the internet for our loved ones. The Internet offers our life and our children with so many opportunities, separate them for the digital world that became needs today will not be the wise solution.

Everyone has the right to access the information, including children and teenagers. They have the right to access the digital world creatively, knowledgeable and fearlessly. Limited access to the internet or digital world could make them disadvantaged (Kidron & Rudkin, 2017). As parents, we should grow up and develop together with our children. We should learn and involved to their world with them, not just being their security, and then being left behind.

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