

- **Do not use games as means of education.** Do not use electronic games as a means of reward or punishment and do not abuse them to “babysittlize” your child. Games can become too important for them.
- **Take care about the change.** From the outset be careful that games are not the only hobby of your child. Take care of his or her mental and physical balance in relation to the computer and offer him or her attractive alternatives.

Magdaléna Rajtová



Our daily Internet

Damper or adviser? New technologies, in this case the Internet brings us faster and easier access to information in our lives. The Internet, beside playing games, communicating or building new relationships also serves as a learning aid or tool. In the family, media education is needed to guide our children even when working with the Internet.

There are several websites that offer various tutorials, information or even educational games in the Internet environment. We know, for example, the civic association eSlovensko, which implements the Zodpovedne.sk project supported by the European Commission within the Safer Internet program. The aim of Zodpovedne.sk is to raise awareness, to spread enlightenment about responsible Internet use as well as to prevent related crimes. Project also includes other projects: Pomoc.sk – a website you can contact when you need help or advice about using technology and Stopline.sk where illegal and inappropriate content on the Internet can be reported. Another is the Ovce.sk (Sheeplive) project. This project is also part of the Zodpovedne.sk project. Ovce.sk consists of two parts - an animated series for children and an international Internet portal. The aim of this project is to prevent and protect from the risks of the Internet, focusing in particular on children in pre-school and of younger school age. A series of animated fairytales show children in an exciting way the principles of how the online world works, the potential risks and pitfalls they may encounter as well as positive sites. The animated series is also designed for parents who can get to know the possible issues of a child-media relationship in this way.

When we talk about protecting a child from negative influences, we have to realize that the Internet is completely natural for today's children. Banning time from being spent on the Internet is therefore not a good way of education. However, prevention and communication with the child is necessary. If a parent observes an activity which the child performs on the Internet and is not suitable for him or her, there is, for example a program that can block certain pages so that the child has no access to them. It can be, for example a page including violent or erotic content (<http://cudo.sk/blokovanie-internetovych-stranok>). There are also programs that work as parental control.

Certainly, even a few hours sitting behind the computer, not only from the physical but also from the psychological side, is not appropriate. The most common problems which appear are eye and back damage as well as a weakening of the child's ability to concentrate. It is necessary to create certain rules for the balanced, conscious and controlled use of the Internet in the family.

Ten Commandments of Responsible Internet Usage (processed by rodinaamedia.ku.sk)

- **Knowledge and skills.** In order to create rules and a system with your children, you need to know why the content of the website is appropriate or inappropriate. Children need to hear the argument that convinces them that there is a reason for what you require from them.
- **Common surfing.** Accompanying your child on the Internet can help him or her, for example when a child cannot help.
- **Communication.** Talk about websites which cause fear and misunderstanding for your children.
- **Time schedule.** Try to agree on the time your child can spend on the Internet. Be sure to follow the agreed rules.
- **Protective software.** There are several protection softwares that can block websites. The regulation of Internet use is ensured by the operating system itself, antivirus software, special software for filtering content or monitoring the child's activities when using a computer and the Internet.
- **List of favorites websites.** Together with your child you can create a list of favorite websites with tabs that can easily be accessed without searching the web.
- **E-mail.** Help your children to create their own e-mail, explain to them that they should not give their e-mail address to strangers as well as that they cannot reveal their password to anyone to prevent personal data misuse.
- **Personal information.** It is necessary to get your child acquainted with security rules when using the Internet. Personal data and data about the family may not be distributed over the Internet. Also a child should not talk about their privacy to strangers as well as a child should not meet people who he or she met on the Internet.
- **Downloading and shopping.** Agree with your child on the rule that before he or she wants to download something, he or she has to ask if he or she can. The child should not have details of your credit card.
- **Exchange of experience.** Learn about use of the Internet at the school your child is attending. You can also exchange advice and experiences with other friends or parents.

Veronika Vrúbelová