Glossary of Online Safety Terminology

Type date

Computing Leader

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Acronyms

An abbreviation of a sentence using the first letter of each word. Online users may use acronyms as a quick way to convey thoughts, actions or sentiments e.g. LOL (Laugh Out Loud).

Adware

Software application which displays adverts and can redirect searches.

App

Short for application, typically used to refer to a piece of software designed for a particular purpose.

Autocomplete

A feature in which an application predicts the word a user is typing.

Avatar

An icon or image to represent a user online on social media, in video games or other services.

BBFC (British Board of Film Classification)

UK organisation charged with rating and classifying film and other forms of media in terms of age and content.

Block

To block someone from contacting a user on a social media account for example.

Blog/Blogging

An updated webpage containing users' opinions/experiences/ observations.

Bot

A program that can do things without a user needing to give instructions. Many bots are malware.

CEOP

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command is tasked to bring offenders to UK Courts.

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Chat

Informal communication via text or messaging platforms which often uses conventions such as emojis, acronyms or text-speak.

Chatroom

A place on the internet where one or more people can chat.

Chatroulette

Strangers interacting over text-chat and webcam. Lots of users post sexual images.

Childline

Confidential helpline service for children and young people in the UK managed by the NSPCC.

Circumventor Sites

Parallel websites that allow children to bypass sites their adults have blocked.

Coercion

The process by which one person convinces another to engage in behaviour and actions to the benefit of the coercer through the use of force or threats.

Cookie

A small file which records a user's personal preferences, shopping choices and other information.

Connectivity

The functionality of sharing data between online devices.

Creeping

Someone who follows someone else's social network profile closely.

Cyberbullying

The use of electronic communication to bully someone.

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Decoy App

These apps help children hide videos/images from their parents.

Digital Footprint

A person's trail of data on the internet that can last indefinitely.

Digital Personality

A collection of all the data about a person's online activity. This can be sold by the companies that collect the data to others. They can then target tailored advertising, information and disinformation specifically intended to be attractive to the individual. This can influence a person's beliefs and choices.

Disinformation

Inaccurate information deliberately distributed and intended to confuse, mislead or influence.

Emoji

A small image or icon used to convey an idea or emotion sent as online messages on a variety of platforms.

Fake News

A news item which is claimed to have been fabricated. Allegations of 'fake news' have been used to discredit accurate news items.

Fabotage

Accessing someone else's social media account without their knowledge and changing information on it.

Firewall

A security system that protects an internal network from an external one such as the internet.

Gamer

A person who plays video games including online, likely with other online users.

Gamer Tag

An alter ego made from an alias, picture or avatar. Sometimes these are offensive.

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Geolocation

The identification or estimation of the real-world geographic location of an object with geolocation capability such as a mobile phone or tracker device.

Griefer

Someone who deliberately harasses online gamers during a gaming session.

Grooming

The process by which an online user gains the trust of another user with the intention of doing them harm or coercing them into engaging in risky or harmful behaviour. This behaviour could occur online (e.g. sending a sexually explicit image) or offline (e.g. agreeing to meet in person).

Hacker

A person who uses technology to gain unauthorised access to information.

Hoax

A fictional story circulated on-line, intended to shape people's beliefs, opinions and behaviours.

Identity Theft

A crime where data is pieced together from an individual to impersonate them for financial gain.

IM

Instant message sent between users via the internet. These are very popular with younger generations.

In-app purchasing

Purchases of services or products are possible within some apps, such as game apps, and real money is required by them.

Incognito browsing

This allows a user to browse the web without their history being recorded on their device.

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ISP

An internet service provider gives access to the internet. ISPs have to comply with the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

Malware

Software which is made to disrupt, damage or gain unauthorised access to a device.

Misinformation

Inaccurate information distributed by accident.

Netiquette

Netiquette is the code of good behaviour on the internet. As the internet changes, so does netiquette.

Night-shift Mode

Also called sleep mode. This changes the brightness and colours of a device with a screen, to reduce the blue light. This encourages the functioning of the sleep hormone Melatonin.

Password managers

A password manager assists in generating and retrieving complex passwords, potentially storing such passwords in an encrypted database or calculating them on demand.

PEGI

Pan-European Game Information. EU classification system that rates games in terms of age suitability and content.

Pharming

Directing a user to a bogus website that pretends to be a real one in order to extract information from them.

Phishing

Emails which appear legitimate but are fake, and entice a recipient to share confidential information.

Photo Sharing

Some apps allow users to share images for a few seconds. These apps can be very damaging to children.

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Pirate Sites

Sites which provide links to download online content such as films, music, games and software illegally without payment.

PM

Private or personal message sent via the internet. Popular feature available on many social media platforms.

Profile

The information a user shares on social media presenting some personal details to other users. It may contain images, likes, hobbies, their network of contacts, contact details etc. Profiles can be unrepresentative and misleading.

Ransomware

A type of malicious software which threatens the victim with publishing private details or harming their device unless money is paid.

Scams

Online scams are schemes to extort money via online communications, e.g. through fake websites or emails.

Screen-grab

Also called screenshot. A way of capturing screen content on computers and mobile devices that can later be used to support issues and assist reporting.

Selfie

Self-portrait photo often taken at arm's length using a Smartphone and uploaded to social media.

Search Engine

A programme which searches the internet based on keywords or content entered by a user.

Sexting

Sending and receiving sexually explicit images/videos via IM, text or social media.

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Social Media

Websites and applications where users can share content and participate in social networking.

Streaming

Listening to music or watching video in real time, instead of downloading a file to your computer and watching it later.

Spam

Messages sent to large numbers of users for the purpose of phishing, spreading malware and advertising.

Spyware

Software that covertly collects information from a device without the device user's permission.

Text speak

A written language used in text messages and online messages which uses abbreviations for commonly known phrases and does not follow standard conventions of spelling, punctuation or grammar.

Torrent sites

Sites offering files for download using a distributed peer-to-peer file sharing system. The programs used to download files via the BitTorrent protocol are called BitTorrent clients.

Trojan

A type of malware which is disguised as legitimate software and accesses confidential information.

Troll

A user who posts inflammatory messages typically on Social Media sites to upset others.

Trolling

The public sending of malicious, abusive or derogatory messages by one user (a 'troll') to another user online with the intention of upsetting or harassing them or damaging their reputation. Trolling is often anonymous.

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Unsubscribing

To cancel a subscription to an online service.

URL

The address of a specific webpage or file on the Internet. Stands for Uniform Resource Locator.

Video Hosting Sites

Websites and apps which allow users to post and view video clips, like YouTube.

Virus

A virus can do many things such as steal data and control a device. They are often caught from email attachments and downloading from a website.

Vloggers

A video blog or video log, usually shortened to vlog, is a form of blog for which the medium is video.

Voice Activated Search

A programme, script or tool that searches the internet based on words spoken by a user.

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