#DITTO

- Scroll Free September

- Scams

- Gaming Addiction

- TikTok App

Hi there, I'm Alan Mackenzie.

I'm an independent consultant specialising in online safety, specifically within education to children, young people, schools and other organizations, and parents.

I'm a strong believer that technology, for the most part, is neutral; behaviour is the most important aspect.

To understand behaviour, we have to be a part of children's lives in order to understand what they're doing with technology and why.

We have to be curious and guide them to realise the wonderful opportunities that the online world gives to all of us, and be there to support them when they need it.

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Foreword from
Alan Mackenzie

Hi and welcome back to a new school year. What a summer we had, wasn't it glorious?

I've probably mentioned before, for my summer holidays my wife and I always drive up to the Scottish Highlands. I'm lucky enough to have visited dozens of different countries around the world from a previous career, but nothing has ever beaten Scotland for its isolated beauty, wildlife and empty golden beaches.

We choose a different area every time we go up and are always sad to leave. This year we went up to the Isle of Mull; specifically we wanted to go up for the wildlife, in particular the white-tailed sea eagle. Capturing this amazing bird on my camera has been on my wish list for many years, and I wasn't let down when I went out on the boat trip. I managed about 50 photos, of which 6 were in focus (not easy with a fast-moving bird and a rocking boat) so I was really happy.

I also purchased a drone to take up as well, but sadly the weather wasn't with us, I only managed to launch it twice. However the videos I got from those two short flights are memories we will treasure forever.

What we can do with technology these days never ceases to amaze me. I love it! I hope you managed to get away, or at the very least had the opportunity to chill out ready for what I think will be an interesting year for online safety.

Alan

#DITTO Junior

There is no #DITTO Junior this month due to this being the first newsletter after the summer break, but it will hopefully be back in October. Please ask your students if they would like to write a short article, or perhaps your digital leaders could undertake a poll?

Here's a few ideas for your to consider:

- What are your favourite apps; why and what do you use them for?

- Do you think technology companies should take more responsibility for the content on their platforms, or should it be up to the people using the platform?

- Do you think games are over-rated? For example, Fortnite is for 12+, GTA is for 18+ but many ignore these age ratings. Why?

- France is going to ban mobile phones in schools. What do you think? Research the reasons why France is introducing a ban and give your thoughts.

Save the Date

Safer Internet Day 2019

Every day is a safer internet day, but the day to celebrate this is:

Tuesday 5th Feb 2019

Ofsted - Inspecting Safeguarding

Ofsted have updated the "Inspecting Safeguarding in Early Years, Education and Skills Settings" handbook. The document can be downloaded HERE and there is a wonderful summary from Rebecca Avery (Kent County Council) HERE.

There's a very good summary of the additions from Andrew Hall HERE

and a good summary of changes from SEA Inclusion HERE

DID YOU KNOW?

Instagram is now a word in the U.S. Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

Instagram - to post a picture to the Instagram photo-sharing service.

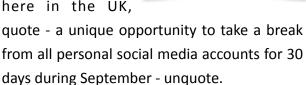Instragrammable - to snag an Instagrammable moment.

#ScrollFreeSeptember

When I first started seeing the hashtag for Scroll Free September I did what I usually do, my eyes went up in the eye sockets, a yawn and a shake of the head. Perhaps it's an age thing, I'm definitely starting to become a glass-half-empty type of person.

What is #scrollfreeseptember?

It's an idea from the Royal Society for Public Health here in the UK, quote - a unique opportunity to take a break from all personal social media accounts for 30 days during September - unquote.

I'm not a fan when it comes to this type of thing, it's making an assumption that we're all the same, that everything is black and white, that we all use social media (or technology in general) in the same way, and that we're all at risk of harm, specifically mental health issues through overuse of social media.

But we come back to that age old argument , "What is overuse?"

If something has taken over your life, if it is having a negative effect on your social life, your profession, your education or any other everyday common activity then fair enough.
But the first thought that came to my mind was, "What about those that have a genuine reliance?" For example those with poor mental health who rely on social media for support and guidance, those who are physically isolated, and so many others.

Almost daily we see a new report saying how teenagers in particular are so anti-social now

compared to when we were younger. Is that really true? If teenagers are continually connected to and talking with their friends via their devices, doesn't that make them more social than we were? Just because they're doing it differently, does that make it wrong?

Think back to when you were a teenager; if you had access to all this amazing technology and always-on connectivity to your friends would you use it in the same way that teenagers do now?

Some will agree, some won't, nothing is ever black and white, and that's what concerned me about this new initiative.

It probably sounds as though I'm advocating that there's nothing wrong with a reliance on technology as opposed to real-world, physical activities. I'm not, balance is everything, and I'm fully aware that for a minority, the balance is in the wrong direction

COLD TURKEY

Give up all personal social media accounts for 30 days.

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Take a break from social media at all social events.

NIGHT OWL

Take a break from social media every evening, after 6PM.

BUSY BEE

Take a break from personal social media accounts when in school or work.

SLEEPING DOG

Give up social media in the bedroom and improve your sleep.

After my initial internal rant I had a closer look at the #scrollfreeseptember campaign, and I'm happy to report that I'm eating my words, because it's not as bad as I'd first thought.

It's worth noting that I recognise my own behaviours: I'm a terrible procrastinator and turn to social media more often than I should; I check various accounts first thing in the morning and throughout the day, I do it when I'm out socialising and much more.

I know that I could get more done and I know that I waste a lot of time.

Rather than a one-size-fits all, there are 5 plans in #scrollfreeseptember as you can see above.

I quite like this, it takes into account a number of different situations and scenarios and I think could be a good idea for us all (adults and children) to give a bit of thought to, and not just for September.

This month I'm going to be a butterfly. What will you be?

http://bit.ly/rsphscroll

Alan Mackenzie

In lessons with children of all ages, we tell them to be careful with the information they post online. We mainly talk about this from a safeguarding perspective, but there are other reasons too, privacy being the big one.

Under that umbrella of privacy there are dozens of different aspects, and people using your information for their own gain is a fast-growing concern.

I noticed it when I was on holiday. A text to my mobile phone thanking me for signing up for a particular service (in this case Learn Spanish) and that my mobile phone account would be debited by just under £10 every Friday

" WHAT?? "

That's not what I really shouted, you can probably imagine the real words I used. I checked my bank account and sure enough money had been taken. I decided to wait until I was back from holiday to investigate, but in the meantime I texted STOP, which is what the premium-rate text said to do if you didn't want to continue with the subscription.

On returning from holiday, more money had been taken. It appears the word STOP actually meant "feel free to take some more."

I was fuming. I consider myself pretty savvy to scams of this nature, but for the life of me I couldn't work out what I had done, if anything at all. Commonly it's clicking on a link or an ad, but for them to know who I am, send me a text and take money from my account required more than just clicking on a link. on a link.

Or did it?

To be honest I'm not sure. If I had clicked on something legitimate I would have had to verify my details and at the very least clicked some sort of submit button?

I scoured the Internet for help with this one and there's a limited amount of information. Plenty of people have been caught out by the scam but no-one seems to be able to give a conclusive answer as to what may have happened.

Even more disturbing, it's likely that I've clicked on something via my mobile phone, which is how the scammer knows my mobile number, but how did they know my bank details? According to some reports online, it appears the mobile phone company gave the details to the scammer as they are allegedly a legitimate business renting the premium rate 5-figure number.

Quite honestly the mind boggles. A phone call to the mobile phone company was useless, as far as they are concerned it was legitimate, I must have clicked on something and given my information away.

Of course, how silly of me!

I did some searching and found that the premium-rate 5-figure mobile number that sent me the text is used by a number of different companies. By a process of elimination I was able to find the company I needed. Their website is appalling with no information, but there was a phone number so I rang a number of times. No answer repeatedly. I sent emails. No answer. I found other phone numbers online. Nothing!

It was time to search for personal information.

Legitimate companies are required to register with Companies House. Anyone can look on Companies House and, for most businesses, it will tell you the name of the Directors. Perfect.

To cut a long story short, it was easy to find information on this person including his real email address. By this time I was in a seriously bad mood, however the email I sent to him was polite and to the point, informing him what had happened, that I believed he was scamming people, and the action I was going to be taking unless I got an immediate refund and explanation as to how he got all my details.

The actions I mentioned were:

1. Contact Action Fraud.
2. Contact the PSA (Phone-Paid Services Authority) and file a complaint.
3. Take him to the small claims court.

Surprisingly, less than 10 minutes after I pressed 'Send', I received a reply with an apology and a promise of a refund, **but no explanation**.

I despise these people from every pore of my body; it was only £20 which I eventually got back, but it could have been hundreds, even thousands. These people prey on the vulnerable to bolster their own bank accounts and couldn't care less about anybody else. I was lucky, I knew what to do, but many people don't.

You may be wondering what the point of this post is.

Firstly, scams and fraudulent activity is getting bigger online, and the criminals are getting better at what they do. These people couldn't care less who they prey on. I was lucky, I managed to find information that I could use.

This is a rarity. It may well be that this is a legitimate business (especially if they're registered with Companies House) but what they are doing goes well beyond any ethical boundaries.

Being vigilant about what we are clicking on is good advice, but it doesn't always work, and if mobile phone providers are not properly vetting the businesses they allow to use these premium services then this sort of thing is going to get bigger.

Advice

Knowing what to do and where to go is the best advice I can give you.

Firstly if something does happen, Google it. I guarantee that you're not the first person it has happened to and there will already be lots of advice out there.

Secondly, report to Action Fraud. Whether anything gets done I don't know, I imagine they are massively under-resourced, but if it's a common scam the more reports they get the more likely they are to investigate.

If it is something that happened on your mobile, such as an unexpected charge, and you're not getting anywhere with your mobile operator, report to the PSA (www.psauthority.org.uk). There is also a 'number checker' facility so you can check to see if they're already aware, and if so it gives you the name of the company and their address.

There is lots of personal information online. Sometimes you have to use that to your own advantage using some simple investigative skills.

Gaming Addiction

Catherine Knibbs (BSc, MBACP (Accred), UKCP Adult Psychotherapeutic Counselling) is a child/adult trauma therapist and author. She is the leading researcher on cyber trauma in the UK, specialising in online abuse in all forms and provides consultancy, education and training on this topic.

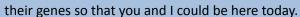Web: www.cybertrauma.com
Twitter: @nibzy

The topic that's hot on everyone's radar at the moment. The media has no doubt brought you many fears about your child being addicted and with recent events such as Jacksonville you have possibly found yourself reading about how violent video games 'produce' violent children/people.

I am an advocate of games for good. I use them in psychotherapy and so in this edition I thought I would talk to you about the myths and spin that often accompanies video games, computer games or Internet games and how and why having a critical eye can help you sieve out the muck from the gold.

First of all I'm going to introduce you to another brain concept. This time it is how the brain works under fear, namely that which the media and scaremongering talk in the school yards imbues.

So if you have read some of my articles before you will know I like to simplify neuroscience so you can understand and apply it to your life. The brain is an interpreter of information that comes in varying formats, namely from our environment and body. Its main function is to keep us alive. In Neanderthal times this was how they survived and passed on their genes so that you and I could be here today.

This is how it worked then and does now:

Behind the Neanderthal man was a rustling sound. He has a few options here

1. Run away and be safe from what could be a tiger wanting to eat him for tea or indeed a leaf rustling.

2. Don't run and risk the leaf actually being the tiger and 'gulp', no more Neanderthal.

And so our brains from many years ago have not changed so much since then. We jump, run and startle to keep ourselves alive and it works because "Its better to be safe than sorry?"

However, in 2018 we don't need to run from tigers, mostly. But we do need to pay attention to the

things that are threats. Such as; money, job security, buses, trains and bad news.

Welcome to 2018 and the gossip that keeps you wary, on edge and terrified that your child is going to 'be addicted', 'become violent', 'have irreversible brain changes' (yes this was recently spouted in Australia) and "your eyes will go square watching TV." Remember that one?

So here's what happens with the science behind this idea. The media, teachers or parents in the yard don't tend to spend many of their waking hours reading research papers (I find this activity so much fun so I can tell you, you may not actually get anything done if you did. These papers are long and sometimes boring and have lots of statistics in them). So, they look to someone who has interpreted the research. This can often be done badly by non-scientists and even long term researchers if it is not their field of expertise and they do not understand gaming.

Herein lies a major issue: The bodies who have deemed that Gaming Disorder is a thing (which it really isn't), have no experience of gaming, do not understand video games, nor do they have in-depth knowledge of family lives around gaming. That's where the clinician's come in, of whom very few do research. (I know I am quite on my own here in the U.K. and so I have to look to the U.S. for support and further evidence).

And so the 'hype' and 'myths' around addiction and disorders are often lacking real supportive evidence, they are passed along by the media and adults who do not fully understand the terminology or symptoms of addiction, violence or aggression and so on, and because your brain has a primary function of paying attention to scary things, such as what Mr. so and so said, or Johnny's mum shared on Facebook, you begin to look towards your child for signs of these 'issues' and lo and behold I receive a call from a parent who believes their child is addicted to video games.

The research points to evidence of many of the issues not being an actual thing and here is some of that research, through easy to read books (I have read all so know the difference between highly academic books and ones written for non-academics), also guests I have interviewed for my podcast Cybersynapse, which you can become a patreon of from as little as £1 per month or more and gain access to the latest conversations around cyber issues (see link at the bottom of the page).

I would suggest that parents and teachers take a look at the book "Moral Combat" by Pat Markey and Chris Ferguson for an in-depth review of violent video games having NO evidence to support that they produce violent people.

Also a book by Anthony Bean called A Clinicians Guide to Gamers and Video Games in Therapy.

Although the title suggests you need to be a therapist it's a fantastic read and explains much about gaming for you to understand (until my book is out aimed at parents)

Have a look at Geekdadgamer as he produces small snippets of videos each week to help you understand games and how to use them in your family. His videos can be found on patreon.com/geekdadgamer

And for those who wish to look towards the research:

The Oxford Internet Institute - Professor Andrew Przybylski and team

London School of Economics: Professor Sonia Livingstone and team

Cath

No more Musical.ly ?

Yes and no, well, sort of.

The app has gone but the service hasn't.

Let me explain.

If you haven't heard of Musical.ly where have you been? A massively popular social media app with younger teenagers and older children.

It was released in 2014 but didn't become really popular until early 2016. Predominantly used in Europe and the U.S., it had approximately 100 million active users.

Essentially it's an app where you sing (lip sync) and act out to your favourite musical genres live (live streaming) and you could also upload the videos directly to your YouTube channel.

There were two privacy settings which is fairly common, private or public, and the majority of the children I spoke to in school over the last couple of years had the setting to private.

The service has been purchased by a Chinese company called ByteDance and in August they removed the Musically service, but before doing so they transferred all user accounts into an app called TikTok.

TikTok has also been around for a few years but the predominant user base has been Asia with a whopping 300 million active users.

It's quite similar to Musically for the most part; a different interface but the same short-form videos that can last up to 15 seconds.

Interestingly the users aren't being combined as far as I'm aware, I initially thought they were, however it appears the app will remain a standalone app in China, maybe it's to do with the more strict censorship laws? I don't know to be honest.

So are there any concerns?

As with any of these things, it isn't the app. Apps are neutral. It's the behaviour; sometimes the behaviour of our own children and sometimes the behaviour of others towards our children.

As with Musical.ly, TikTok is used for live streaming, broadcasting yourself live either to a private or a public audience. Musical.ly was mainly about lip-syncing but TikTok is more than that, it describes itself as a 'global video community, making it easy for you to watch awesome short videos and make your own videos', but on the vast majority of the accounts I've looked through it's acting out or syncing to music.

If you have seen past issues of #DITTO you'll be well aware of the concerns over live streaming.

Since early 2017 this has become an emerging issue whereby sexual predators are using apps such as this to contact children.

Just before the summer break the IWF (Internet Watch Foundation) released their latest research which revealed really concerning statistics regarding children being groomed, coerced and blackmailed into live-streaming their own abuse over webcams, tablets and mobile phones.

Some of the highlight statistics are:

- **98% of images found were of children 13 and under.**

- **28% of children were 10 or under.**

- **96% of victims were girls.**

- **96% showed a child on their own.**

We need to be careful about demonising particular apps; as I mentioned at the beginning of this article, apps/technology are neutral, it's the behaviour that is key. Any platform or service on the internet can be a target for offenders, particularly if it's popular with children, so it's important that we keep conversations going with children and talk to them regularly about what is right or wrong, and what to do if something doesn't feel right.

CONTENT

As with any platform like this, there's going to be content that is inappropriate. When there's hundreds of thousands of users, moderation processes can be slow and sometimes seem non-existent.

Remember, many (most) apps are designed for children 13+.

CONTACT

Most apps default to PUBLIC, meaning that anyone can view posts, follow and private message children.

Double check privacy settings and ensure your child knows how to block/report users.

CONDUCT

Conduct is the behaviour of your own child. How are they expressing themselves? Are you happy with their bio and their profile picture? Are they behaving in a way that you are happy with?

For more information about the TikTok app see the Common Sense Media guide here:

http://bit.ly/dittotiktok

To see the IWF research see here:

http://bit.ly/dittoiwf

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