



**NATIONAL COMPUTER BOARD**

# Online Responsible Choices for Youngsters



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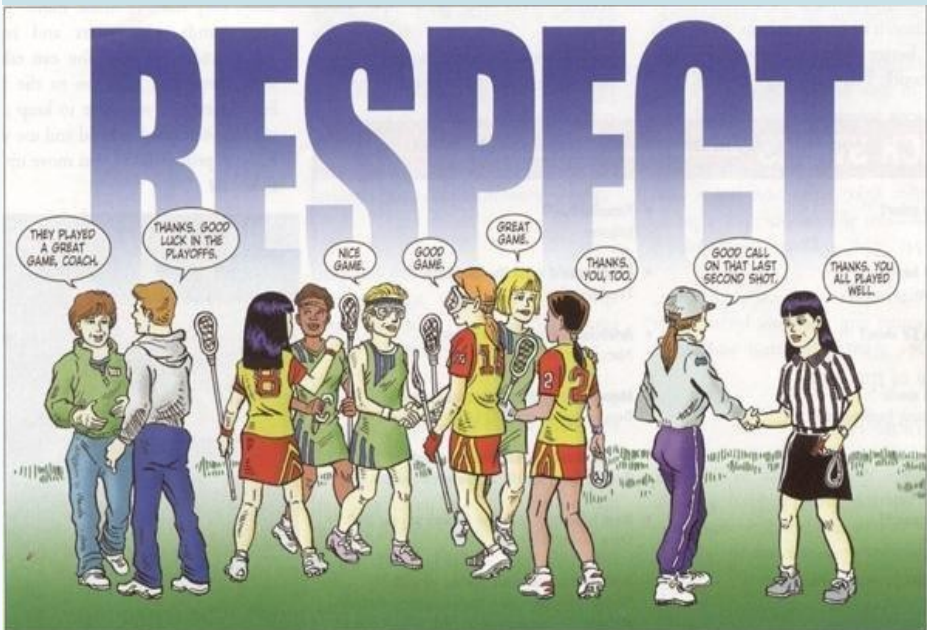
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The Internet has drastically changed the way that children interact with the world. They have access to in-depth knowledge, tools to express their creativity, and also to people from all over the world. Yet along with offering a classroom and a virtual playground to children, the Internet also offers new risks such as:

- Cyberbullying
- Exposure to inappropriate material
- Online predators
- Revealing too much personal information

Learning to recognize the warning signs of these risks will lessen potential negative impacts on youngsters. By acting responsibly online youngsters can help make the Internet a safer place for themselves. Online Rights and Responsibilities are not only focussed at ensuring that youngsters are using the Internet in a more cautious manner but also ensuring that they are connecting to the cyber world with respect.



The Internet is a powerful tool for communication. With access to the Internet, anyone can effectively be an international publisher and broadcaster. Many Internet users, however, do not realize that they are publishing to the world and the Internet has potential for misuse.

The rights of freedom of expression do apply to the use of computing resources. So, too, however, do the responsibilities and limitations associated with those rights. Thus, legitimate use of computing resources does not extend to whatever is technically possible. In addition, while some restrictions are built into the computer's operating systems and networks, they are not the only restrictions on what is permissible. Users of computing resources must abide by all applicable restrictions, whether or not



they are built into the operating system or network and whether or not they can be circumvented by technical means. Moreover, it is not permissible for computer users to exceed those restrictions; rather, it is the computer user's responsibility to know and comply with them. When you are pulled over to the side of the Information Superhighway, "I'm sorry officer - I didn't realize I was over the speed limit" is not a valid defense.

So just what are the applicable restrictions? The answer is - the same laws and policies that apply in every other context. "Cyberspace" is not a separate legal jurisdiction, and it is not exempt from the normal requirements of legal and ethical behaviour. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind is that conduct that would be illegal or a violation in the "off-line" world will still be illegal or a violation when it occurs online. Computer users who engage in electronic communications with persons in other countries or on other systems or networks may also be subject to the laws of those other countries and the rules and policies of those other systems and networks.

As such it becomes important to understand what your rights are when you start to venture in the cyber world.

Below are some of the online rights that an individual needs to know.

- You have the right to protect your identity
- You have the right to withhold personal details if you do not know who is at the other end or you feel unsure
- You have the right to participate, have fun and search for all the information available that is appropriate to your age and personality
- You have the right to express yourself freely when online, while always respecting others
- You have the right to be heard and to be treated with respect
- You have the right to safeguard anything that you have created, anywhere, even on the web
- You have the right to be critical and to dispute or discuss anything you read or come across
- You have the right to make use of new technologies to develop your personality and increase your capabilities
- You have the right to protect yourself from viruses and spam

## RIGHTS

### 1.0 **Respect the right of others online**

Respect comes in many forms; some have to be earned, while others should automatically be given out of courtesy. It means showing consideration of another person's feelings, ideas, standards, needs, preferences, uniqueness, peculiarities, and their property.

Respect means you acknowledge the person, take them seriously, and be honest with them. While everyone wants to be respected, what comes through online may not feel as if that respect is being received or given.



There are several reasons this may be happening, and there are things you can do to have a more consistent, respectful online experience.

**If you don't feel respected online, here are a few questions to consider:**



**1. Do you respect yourself online?**

If you don't respect yourself, you make it open for everyone else to disrespect you. There is a clear line between making the occasional joke at your expense and becoming a joke. The first person you need respect from is yourself; it is very hard to respect anyone else if you do not respect yourself. This means listening to how you feel and respecting those feelings, being honest with yourself showing yourself

kindness, and not cutting yourself down. This is not self-delusion or self-aggrandizement; it is honestly knowing and valuing yourself with both your faults and merits.

**2. Have you positioned yourself to be respected?** Does your profile and photo show you as someone to respect? Not someone to fear, not someone 'sexy', but someone who can be respected for who you are. Do your comments deserve respect or are they rude, discriminatory, illiterate, or foolish? Do you show respect for other's comments, ideas and values? Do you listen to what your friends are saying through their comments and provide thoughtful responses, or are all your comments trashing them or focused on you?

**3. Do you show respect for others?** Respect works both ways, if you trash others online you won't receive their respect - and you aren't likely to get the respect of anyone else who sees how you trash people. If you want respect, give respect.

**4. Is a comment aimed at you disrespectful, or are you misinterpreting?** Sometimes comments are hard to interpret and what was meant to be funny doesn't come across that way. It may be because of your mood at the time you read it, the clumsy way they wrote it, or the weird mood they were in.

For all the advantages of online communications, a clear disadvantage is that you usually don't have the visual clues you would get when speaking face to face, or the tonal clues you would get from hearing the comment, or the con-



textual clues helping you understand where the person is coming from. On top of these hazards, the person may be multitasking (which people always imagine they master better than they actually do) and not even aware that your responses are getting more agitated. Before busting into a flame war over assumed dis-

respect, just ask. Using emoticons - smiley faces - can also help ensure others understand a comment was meant light heartedly.

**5. Are people disrespecting your privacy?** The first question to ask here is have you even let people know what you think is ok - and not ok - to share about you? Do you actually know what your friends and family consider ok to share versus disrespectful?

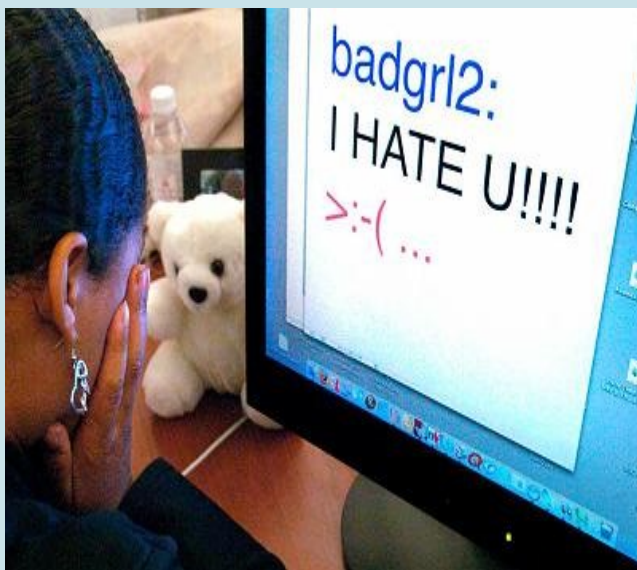
It's rude to expose information about someone - including pictures and videos — without their permission. The only way you'll know what they want to keep private is to ask them; and the only way for them to know what you want private is to tell them. Unfortunately, shockingly few people ever ask about boundaries until information has been overshared and a problem arises. Take a few minutes to find out how to respect friend's boundaries, and explain how they can respect yours. Ask that any offending, or exposing information be taken down - and return the courtesy.

**6. If someone doesn't act respectfully towards you, why keep them as a contact?** Offline and online, don't associate with toxic, rude or disrespectful people. Don't lash out and stoop to their level, simply drop them from your contacts and your online life.

**8. Do you really know who is disrespecting you?** Face-to-face you know exactly who is disrespecting you, but online jerks can appear to be someone else. If you get an angry, rude or disrespectful comment, text, email, photo, etc., that surprises you, consider whether the person it appears to be from is actually the person behind the meanness. It is easy - and free - to spoof a phone number, it's easy to shoulder-surf and see someone's password and hijack their account, and it can be tempting to jerks to hide their identity and use the information to create drama between friends, humiliate someone by sharing a private comment or photo they discovered, and so on.



**9. Disrespect on the Internet comes through cyber-bullying, harassment and online crimes like ID theft, hacking, and setting people up for risk.** If any of these occur, take immediate action. Get the help and support you need. Block this person from any further contact. Keep records of any exchanges, attacks, or other issues. Notify the service the abuse occurs on, as the company should take immediate steps to remedy the situation. If there is a threat of physical violence, or the situation warrants intervention, contact CERT-MU or the Police. Many teens and adults are shocked to discover that their bullying or harassing behaviour may actually be criminal. These crimes may be punishable under the Mauritian laws.





# RIGHTS

## 2.0 I have the right to privacy

Your privacy on the Internet depends on your ability to control both the amount of personal information that you provide and who has access to that information.

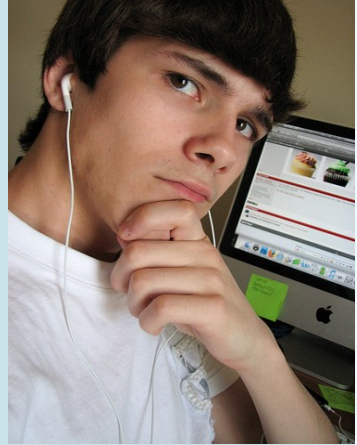
### Think before you share personal information

#### First, read the website's privacy policy

Privacy policies should clearly explain what data the website gathers about you, how it is used, shared, and secured, and how you can edit or delete it. If there is no privacy statement, then better not post any personal data on that website.

#### Do not share more than you need to

- ⇒ Do not post anything online that you would not want made public.
- ⇒ Minimize details that identify you or your whereabouts.
- ⇒ Keep your account numbers, user names, and passwords secret.
- ⇒ Only share your primary email address or Instant Message (IM) name with people who you know or with reputable organizations. Avoid listing your address or name on Internet directories and job-posting sites.
- ⇒ Enter only required information—often marked with an asterisk (\*)—on registration and other forms.



#### Choose how private you want your profile or blog to be

Modify browsers or options to manage who can see your online profile or photos, how people can search for you, who can make comments on what you post, and how to block unwanted access by others.



**STOP**

Remember your pictures, videos, writing and messages are viewed and heard by many people.

**THINK - CHECK**

Have I used appropriate messages and pictures online?

**SEND - SAVE  
GO FOR IT...**

You are ready to post online content safely!

**STOP**  
AND DO THE  
RIGHT THING

Failure to adhere to the online code, results in your reputation being tarnished.

# RIGHTS

## 3.0 Growing up in a safe environment is a fundamental right for all

Although the Internet did not create online predators, it has significantly increased the opportunities predators have to meet victims while minimizing detection. They can communicate with youngsters anonymously through instant messaging, social networking sites, chat rooms, message boards, and even mobile phones.

Online predators do not fit any one mould or stereotype; seemingly upstanding citizens have been caught enticing youngsters for sexual acts. Contrary to popular belief, most online predators are not paedophiles. They target pre-pubescent children, while online predators typically target youngsters who engage in risky online behaviour.



### Grooming

Predators take advantage of youngster's natural vulnerabilities, such as their desire to appear adult or their need for attention. "Grooming" is the process through which predators play on these vulnerabilities by offering youngsters gifts and attention. It does not happen overnight. Grooming can be a long process that a patient, tenacious predator has planned and perfected to gain a youngster's trust. This grooming may lead to the child's willingness to meet the person with whom he or she is chatting. Offenders will often entice a child into a face-to-face meeting by:

- ⇒ Exploiting a youngster's natural curiosity about sex
- ⇒ Lowering the youngster's inhibitions by gradually introducing explicit and sex abuse images
- ⇒ Using his or her adult status to influence and control a youngster's behaviour
- ⇒ Offering attention and affection
- ⇒ Betraying a youngster's trust by manipulating his or her emotions and insecurities

## Guarding Against Predators

Youngsters who experience online victimization may not share personal details with their parent or guardian right away, but there are warning signs that can help identify a youngster who has faced a situation of online victimization. Parents and guardians should keep in mind that not all youngsters are being groomed by older predators; they may have sexual encounters with peers and older teens. However, any adult seeking a sexual encounter with a minor is considered a predator. If a child comes to you with a disclosure of exploitation, reassure him or her that talking to an adult is the right action to take and divert any blame away from the victim.



## Warning Signs of Grooming or Exploitation

- ⇒ Spending an excessive amount of time on the computer
- ⇒ Becoming angry when he or she cannot get on the computer
- ⇒ Withdrawing from family and friends
- ⇒ Minimizing the screen or turns off the monitor when you come into the room
- ⇒ Inappropriate images or websites on the computer
- ⇒ Strange phone numbers on home telephone bills
- ⇒ Gifts in the mail from an unknown person, such as webcams or mobile phones

# RIGHTS

## 4.0 Human rights apply to both the online and offline worlds

*“Everyone has the right to live without the fear of being bullied” (Female victim of cyber bullying, 14 years old)*

It sounds simple, right? That's because it is. Everyone has human rights. We deserve respect, to live in a world free from hatred, violence, harassment and bullying – **online and offline**. When you're online, remember that you (and everyone else) have the right to:

<b>Be safe!</b>	You might not experience physical violence online, but you might experience mental and emotional violence or harassment. You have the right to be free from all types of violence and harassment.
<b>Have fun!</b>	You might not realise it, but you have the right to have fun. There is a human right that says that you have the right to leisure and play. People that are being bullied may feel like they cannot spend time with their friends and enjoy themselves like everyone else. So remember, you have the right to have fun safely at school, in public or online!
<b>Be healthy!</b>	An important human right is the right to a good standard of physical and mental health. This means that you have a right to have health care. It also means that you have a right to be free from other people's behaviour that may hurt your health. Cyber-bullying can be extremely distressing and may cause physical and mental injuries, such as anxiety and depression.
<b>Privacy!</b>	People who are cyber-bullied might have their personal information put online or sent by phone for everyone to see. This includes texts and photos that are hurtful and embarrassing. If this is done without permission your right to privacy is not being respected.
<b>Get an education!</b>	Cyberbullying can make people feel unsafe and unwelcome at school. We all have the right to education and should be able to go to school without being worried about our safety and to know more about cyber-bullying.
<b>Have a say!</b>	You have the right to express your feelings and have your say! People who are bullied may feel like they can't express themselves as they are worried and scared. So remember; both online and offline you have the right to have your voice heard as long as you are respectful of yourself and others!
<b>Work safely!</b>	If you are old enough to have a job you also have the right to work and fair working conditions. This means that your workplace should be safe and be free from cyberbullying.

These are just some of the many human rights that we all have.

### Rights and responsibilities

As we all have rights we also all have responsibilities.

We all have the responsibility to make sure that we respect the rights of other people. Although you might find it easier to protect the rights of your friends, the responsibility to protect and respect the rights of others applies to everyone.

Cyberbullying is everyone's concern. We all have the responsibility to protect everyone's rights and make sure that people are not cyber-bullied. If you see someone being bullied online, be part of the solution, not the problem, and back them up.

## RIGHTS

### 5.0 Tolerance is an important attribute of online life

We have reached a period in our evolution as a nation where tolerance appears to be optional. Certainly, there are times when we all lose our patience to cope and show intolerance towards the people who get in our way. We are only human, after all.

As we use the forums on web pages, are we being tolerant of others opinions? Do we respect our colleagues' right to their opinion online? We are today living in a cyber world where everything is going virtual. People are using the Internet to post their opinions about politics, religion, race and many other topics. Social Networking sites and blogs have emerged as popular and potential means for youngsters to express their opinions on the Internet.



# RIGHTS

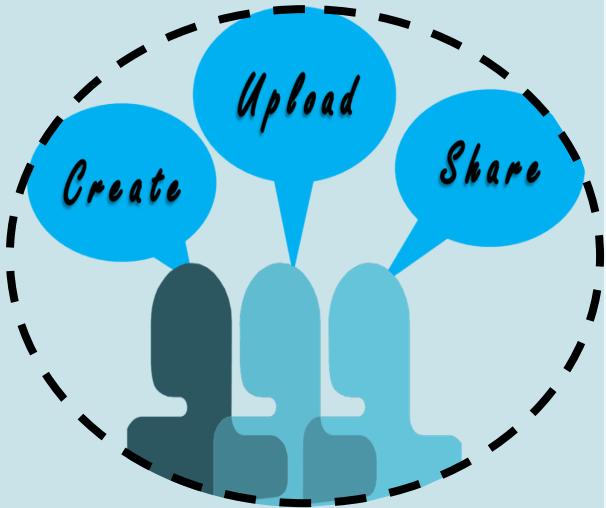
## 6.0 Sharing your thoughts, ideas and points of view with others online is important

In our individual personal lives the ability to publish our thoughts run from creating long form books, shorter form essays and blogging and the short form snippets of Twitter and Facebook. These basic options for communication have variable degrees of value depending on who is actually listening and interacting.

Publishing your thoughts online has always been highly fashionable in our internet era and was accelerated with the advent of the Web 2.0, which in many ways was the enabler for the vast - and mostly superficial - networked Facebook generation.

Being clear about your personal intellectual property value, has become increasingly blurred in an era which has encouraged sharing at many levels, and some people may have forgotten the importance of maintaining their private thoughts and life experiences amongst the online social life interaction noise.

There's a time and place for sharing your ideas and information online with chosen others and another to privately record your own thoughts and chronological progress on projects. Organizing your thoughts into private or public access can greatly help you to protect ideas which may be valuable to you whether you realize it or not in the moment.





## **CERT-MU**

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