digital matters

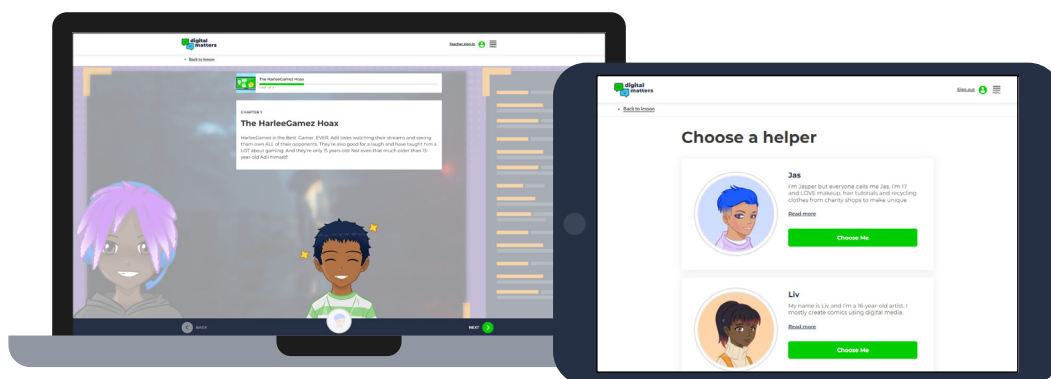# Parent & Carer Companion Guide

Introduction

As the world becomes more reliant on technology, it's important for children to grow up understanding how the online world works and what positive interactions look like. The [Digital Matters platform](#) is designed to help children navigate online issues in a way that allows them to take risks and explore consequences without harm.

The app is divided into two sections that help your child develop their understanding of each online safety topic.

The first is **Interactive Learning**, which is designed for use in the classroom. It features a range of quiz-based questions to encourage children to think about and discuss key points in the module. As a parent, you can also make use of the Interactive Learning section to help introduce your child to the topics.

The second is **Once Upon Online**, a story-based activity where your child has to make choices to move the story forward. Users receive instant feedback on how their decisions impact the characters, helping children to understand that what they do online has real world consequences. The story allows them to make choices just to see where they go without putting themselves in harm's way.

Digital Matters is a great way to explore online safety in a realistic and engaging manner.

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TESCO mobile
Every little helps

Take Home

As a part of the lesson, your child's teacher may assign take-home work to consolidate their learning. Teachers may choose from the following activities or may have their own activity for children to do.

Option 1: Your child might show you a printout of their Once Upon Online journey. With your help, they may be asked to consider what other choices the characters may have made and how those choices would have led to different results. Because the Once Upon Online story only allows children to select one of two choices, it's important to discuss other possibilities. It's unlikely that in real life children will only have two choices.

Option 2: Your child may share their Once Upon Online journey printout with you. There are also a selection of reflection questions for children to consider once they complete their journey. They can then discuss their journey and these questions with you. At home, you may want to do the journey on your own to see what ending you get and to compare the choices you each made. You may also wish to complete the journey a second time with your child and discuss the potential outcomes for each decision point.

Managing Online Information
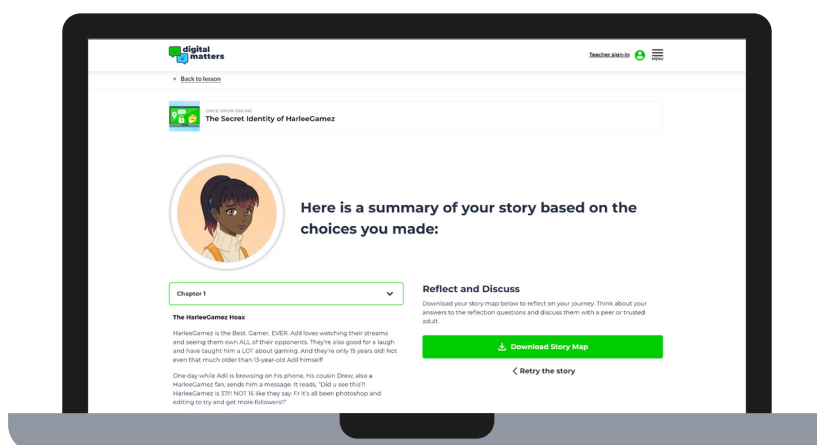
Fast facts you need to know

Use these facts to have informed conversations about the topic with your child:

- ¼ of children aged 12-15 do not think about the truthfulness of information on newly-discovered sites or apps

- 57% of children ages 12-15 thought that some of the information they saw on these sites or apps was true but were critical of what they saw

Source: Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2020/21 (Ofcom)

- only around 30% of children 12-15 check the truthfulness of what they see online

- only 2% of children and young people have critical literacy skills needed to judge information

- 60% of children reported they trust news less because of 'fake news'

Source: Digital misinformation/disinformation and children (UNICEF)

Online Information Quiz

How much do you know about managing online information?

Keep your child's engagement with the module going by competing against each other on the quiz below. Who can score the highest?

Once finished, check out the answers at the end of the document to see how you did before learning a little more about each one.

1. What is an opinion?
   a. a piece of information verified by multiple reputable sources
   b. a piece of information based on values and morals from family and friends
   c. an idea that is based on factual information or beliefs
   d. none of these

2. What is misinformation?
   a. incorrect information that is shared as fact
   b. factual information shared as opinion
   c. incorrect information that is called out as false
   d. factual information that is mislabelled as false

3. What should you look for to check if information is reliable?
   • _____
   • _____
   • _____

4. Why might someone spread misinformation?
   a. to influence others to share similar beliefs
   b. because they think it is true
   c. to turn people against a certain person or idea
   d. all of these

5. Which of the following is a reliable source of information?
   a. a 50-year-old science textbook
   b. an image shared on social media
   c. an influencer in that field
   d. none of these

Recommended Resources

This list of resources will help you learn more about managing children's personal information online so that you can be prepared for online information issues that might come up.

Internet Matters

Tackling fake news and misinformation advice hub
Navigate the different types of information online and how fake news and misinformation might impact people's beliefs online. Learn how to support children in deciphering what is real online.

Find the fake
Complete this quiz with your child to learn about fake news and test each other's knowledge on the topic.

Fake news, facts and questions guide
Get support to help children develop their digital literacy and critical thinking to spot the difference between fact and fiction online.

Summary of types of fake news
Learn where you can go to verify information and what you can do to support your child as they navigate a wealth of information on the internet.

How to help LGBTQ+ children find safe online communities and resources
If your child has identified or thinks they identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, there are hundreds of online communities and resources that can support you and your child on their journey of self-discovery. This article from Ditch the Label guides you through helping your child ensure they are finding the right information and support for them.

BBC Bitesize: How to talk to your kids about fake news
A guide with video to help you discuss fake news and misinformation online with your child.

Childnet: Fake News
What is fake news? Get answers to questions you may have about the topic.

NSPCC: Fake news, hoaxes and misinformation
Learn about the risks of fake news and find out how to spot hoaxes and misinformation.

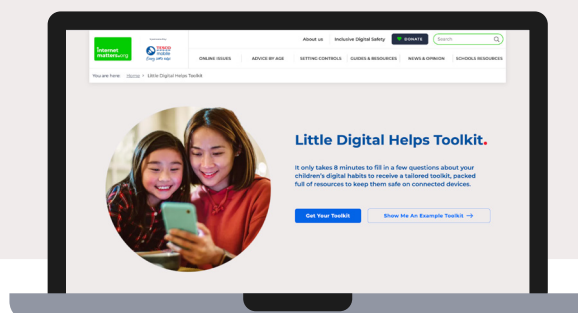**UK Safer Internet Centre: Supporting critical thinking and reliability online**
Tips for parents and carers to help their children learn about misinformation online.

Little Digital Helps Toolkit
Stay on top of your child's online safety

Fill in a few questions about your children's digital habits to receive a tailored toolkit, packed full of resources to keep them safe on connected devices.

CREATE YOUR TOOLKIT

Answers to the Thinking Critically Quiz

See how you did on the online information quiz. Discussing the answers with your child will help them to consolidate the information they learnt from the module. These conversations are vital to keeping your child safe online.

1. **The answer is c – an idea based on factual information or beliefs!** Facts can be verified across multiple sources while beliefs are based on morals and values from family or friends. Oftentimes, opinions and beliefs are shared as fact, which can lead to confusion and the spreading of false information. Sometimes this type of information can lead to people developing extreme views about events, people or situations.

2. **The answer is a - incorrect information shared as fact!** Not all misinformation is shared with ill intent. On social media, it is especially easy to share images and information without verifying it, believing it is true when it is not. That's why it's vital that the sources of information are checked before it is shared to ensure that it is both true and reliable.

3. Answers may vary but could include:

    - Where is the information coming from? Is it from a reliable news site or a quote that someone said in an interview?

    - How old is the information? Guidance and advice changes as new information is discovered. This is especially true with information related to science. Research that is even a few months old is not as reliable as recent research. It's important to avoid using old information as fact.

    - How many sources are there? Factual information should be verified across multiple sources. If there are inconsistencies, it's important to consider why that might be and to spend time researching the information a little more.

    - What is the purpose of the information? Some information online is aimed at getting people to click onto the page (clickbait) and may not hold any truth. Information that is meant to get a reaction, persuade people's beliefs or garner an emotional reaction should be researched in depth.

4. **The answer is d - all of these!** Not everyone who shares misinformation does so for negative reasons. A lot of misinformation is spread on social media because people believe it to be true and do not research the information to verify it. Some people spread misinformation for purposes that are not so innocent, however. Regardless of the purpose, users should take time to verify whatever they would like to share. In many cases, it's a matter of a quick online search or visit to a fact verification website.

5. **The answer is d - none of these!** Outdated information or information that is shared on social media may not be accurate. The same goes for influencers because they may be sponsored to share the information they spread. For example, a health influencer may talk about the benefits of a diet pill because they are paid to do so. They are unlikely to use the product themselves. Regardless of the source, it's important to do your own research with an open mind and to read information that supports your views and goes against them before making a decision.