

VENTURE MAT ONLINE

April 2022 Issue 9



What's been happening?

At Trevithick:



Reception have been enjoying using the microscope to look at all their living creatures such as caterpillars and tadpoles. They are still continuing their kaleidoscope patterns as well as mini

mash.

Year 1 created animated books using Purple Mash and have begun to learn about algorithms, creating code and debugging. They have also been using the iPads to create some digital art.



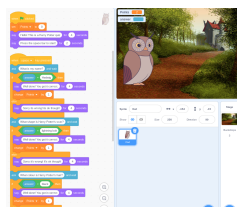
Year 2 have been tinkering with Scratch Jr, learning how it works. They have also planned and created simple algorithms.

Year 3 have been learning how to animate in Scratch, they have used different event blocks to start their code as well as loops and timers.



Year 4 followed instructions to create a Shark game in Scratch and are working on creating a Viking raid animation using events, timers and repeat blocks.

Year 5 created some amazing games in Scratch, using a whole range of elements, including timers, inputs, variables and conditionals. The children particularly enjoyed playing each other's games. They are also learning tips and tricks to help their word processing skills and presentation as well as developing their touch typing.



Year 6 have been creating and coding their own games on Scratch. They started by planning their games and mapping out the game fundamentals (scoring system, levels.) After this, they chose their desired sprites (game characters) and designed the background. They then spent several weeks creating and editing the code to make their



games work. They finished with a session where they had the chance to play each other's games.

Dragons have been using their iPads to take photos of things they have found on their scavenger hunts. They have been accessing maths songs and dances. Students have taken selfies of a range of facial expressions. Some have used it to support their writing or when drawing digital art.

At St Issey:



Piskies have been using their



Chromebooks and smart-screen to practise their maths skills. They are getting much better at logging themselves on/off the computer too.

Elves have been using their Chromebooks to look at the SIS Big Map and pinpoint different settlement types. They have also used different maps online to look at scales and topography.

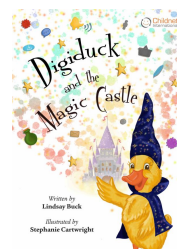
Safer Internet Day 2022



Safer
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This year's 'Safer Internet day' was celebrated

throughout the school, including an assembly and a range of activities in the classroom. The theme for 2022 was 'All fun and games? Exploring respect and relationships online'.



The younger children read 'Digiduck and the Magic Castle', they discussed in-app purchases within games, keeping passwords strong and private and talking to trusted adults if they are ever uncertain about something on their device.

There is further advice below for parents about in-app/ in-game purchases.

All Digiduck stories are free to download and can be found here:

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/digiduck-stories/>

The older children were asked to help an Alien who was visiting Earth to learn all about the fun we have when we're online. The children gave some fantastic advice to the alien, discussing online gaming, being wary of talking to strangers, in-game purchases, scammers and in-game chat. Every class shared consistent, valuable advice to the alien, who was very thankful for all their help!



Online Gaming

Online gaming is a fantastic way for children to develop skills in communication, strategic thinking, creativity and more.



(<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/online-gaming-advice/online-gaming-the-benefits/>)

However, there are also risks to playing online games, from chatting to strangers, to gaming addiction.

It's really important that we help the children prepare for problems they may encounter when gaming online.

- Ensure children are playing games that are appropriate for them.
- Encourage children to talk about the games they enjoy and any problems they might have encountered.
- Check security settings on devices to make sure location settings are turned off.
- Discuss in-game chat, is it important to the game? Could it be turned off or restricted? Ask what they talk about in the chats and remind children to NEVER share private information (name, address, etc.)
- Turn off in-game spending, ensuring it is password protected.
- Discuss screen time, every child will have a different tolerance for screen time.

Age ratings on games

There is a huge range of games available to children online, it's important that we know what the children are playing and whether or not they are appropriate for them.



1. Look at the PEGI rating. This is an age rating used for games and apps, it will also give an indication of the type of content the game has.

2. Check the game/app on www.commonsemmedia.org/ this is a good source of information about games and apps and what to expect from them.

3. Play the game yourself, this is a great way for you to experience the game and any issues your child might encounter.

4. Use YouTube to watch videos of the games/apps being played.



5. Spend time with your child while they're playing the game and see for yourself what they are seeing.

Another helpful website is www.taminggaming.com where you can find suggestions for games based on your child's age and game preference. There are also in depth reviews and recommendations.

In-game Chat

Over the past few years gaming has become an increasingly social pastime. Many games provide in-game chat, both typed words and voice chat. Although we recommend children turn these features off when playing games with people they don't know, we know that children often like to talk whilst gaming and so are reluctant to turn them off.



Therefore, it's important that children know how to chat safely and what to do if something goes wrong.



In-game chat can be a great way for children to learn how to cooperate with others, develop strategy and share tips for the game. It's a chance for children to socialise and discuss common interests with others around the world. It can also help children find a community of like-minded people.



However, there are obvious risks to children chatting with strangers on the internet and it's important that children know how to avoid them and what to do if something happens.

Children need to know the following advice:

- Never share private information - full name, address etc.
- Remember that they may be playing with adults or people much older than themselves, so beware of inappropriate language.
- Insults from other players can really hurt them emotionally and mentally and they should talk to an adult if it happens.
- Children should know how to report and block players who share inappropriate language or insults within the game or gaming platform.
- NEVER accept a request to join a private chat, children are likely to feel more at ease in a private chat and therefore likely to share private information and photos. Private chats often happen away from the game and are not monitored by the in-game moderators.
- Be wary of trade requests, or being given gifts within the game. The trade could be a scam or a way to encourage them to join a private chat.



To make chatting safer have a look at the chat settings, you can often set them so children can only chat with friends, or turn it off completely. Make sure children know how to report and block players who are

inappropriate or use bad language, reporting players can lead to the player being banned from the game.

Children should be taught how to take screenshots of games or chats as these can be used as evidence if required. There are many simple guides online.

As always, the best advice is to play the games with your children, or have conversations about what they like to play and why. Most of all, it's important that children know they can talk to a trusted adult if they ever feel uncomfortable online.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/in-game-chat/>

Online Gaming Communities

Online gaming communities allow gamers to share tips and tricks, discuss games, characters and stories and much more, with people who share the same interests.



Over the last few years more and more children have been using apps/websites such as Discord, Twitch and Reddit to discuss their favourite games. These sites are accessed by adults as well as children and it is important that parents are aware of which sites their children are using.

Twitch is a live streaming app where you can watch others playing games online, or you can stream your own gameplay for others to watch. The app's age rating is 13+ and it prohibits under 13s from using it. There are NO parental controls in the app, although there are some settings that can be used to make it safer for children. From our recent Online Safety survey we can see that Twitch's popularity with our children is increasing. For more information please see the schools' websites.



Discord is a discussion forum which is very popular within gaming communities. Gamers use it for discussing game play, tips, tricks and more. It can also be linked to a Twitch account. Discord has an age rating of 13+ and has NO parental controls. However, there are more advanced privacy settings for the app. There is the option of using voice chat as well as typing to communicate with others which could pose more risks for children. Discord is an invite only chat site which means that different forums cannot be searched for or accessed unless you have been invited. As with Twitch, Discord's usage is increasing amongst the children. For more information please visit the schools' websites.



Finally, Reddit is another popular discussion forum for gamers and the gaming community. This is also a 13+ app, however it can be accessed and read without the need for an account, making it open to all. There are some settings that can be used, such as turning off adult content and the ability to set who

you can receive messages from. The other big consideration for Reddit is the potential for children to be exposed to misinformation. For more information please visit the schools' websites.

In-Game Purchases and Loot Boxes

There are lots of ways the gaming industry can make money, one is through people buying their games but another way is through in-game spending.



There are different ways that games encourage us to spend money whilst playing them.

- Microtransactions; these are small amounts for items or upgrades etc.
- Downloadable content; these are add ons to existing games.
- Online play; paying to socialise online or compete against others.
- In-game currency; exchanging money for digital currency that can only be spent in specific games.
- Loot boxes; see below for more information.

These purchases can soon add up and become expensive. It's harder for children to understand that they are spending real money on these items as it is all done digitally.



There are ways to prevent children from being able to spend money on these items and restrict what purchases they can make. Every gaming device will have an option in the settings to restrict in-game spending. This can be password protected so children do not have access to it.

For specific instructions on how to set this up please see the website below.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/gaming/purchasing-and-managing-spending-in-gaming/>



Loot boxes are another concern for parents because of the gambling behaviour it can promote in children.

Loot boxes are similar to a digital treasure chest. They can contain items of varying value, popularity and quality. The items are usually weapons, or skins and are not needed for success in the game. The contents of the loot box are hidden until it has been purchased and so it is a gamble as to whether the items inside are worth the money spent.

Games that have loot boxes use 'nudge' techniques, reminding and suggesting players to make a purchase. The act of purchasing Loot boxes can become addictive. Belgium, the Netherlands and China have moved to classify Loot boxes as a form of gambling or are restricting them. UK MPs have urged for Loot boxes to be reassessed here too.

For more information please visit the website below.

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/what-are-loot-boxes>

How to report an incident



If your child tells you or shows you something inappropriate that they have seen online please report it. It could help prevent this from happening to someone else.

The first place it needs reporting is to the APP/ Website/Game it happened on.

If you are worried about online abuse or the way someone has been communicating online let CEOP know. You can report it by visiting www.ceop.police.uk/ or by clicking the button on our website. The website will guide you through how to make a report.

For further advice visit the School's website or visit the [Childline](https://www.childline.gov.uk/) website or call 0800 1111