



What The Business Software Alliance Is Doing To Combat Online Child Exploitation

Business Software Alliance (BSA)
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Young children today may never know a world without the Internet - a virtual frontier offering exciting new opportunities, entertainment and connectivity. But the Internet also poses both opportunities and serious challenges. Whether they are downloading and/or copying commercial unlicensed software found on the Internet or buying it from an Internet auction, it's possible that children may expose themselves to potentially unsafe situations. The potential perils include exposure to computer viruses attached to illegal software; privacy violations created by giving out personal data; inappropriate Web material that is sometimes accessible through sites offering unlicensed software; and unwanted solicitations, or spam, from vendors or site hosts that capture visitor information.

In its mission to promote a safe and legal digital world, the Business Software Alliance (BSA) provides a myriad of free, online resources to children, parents, teachers and guardians to learn about safe, ethical and legal computer behavior.

BSA launched a website, www.cybertreehouse.com, designed exclusively for young people to learn about appropriate computer usage in a fun and informative way. As kids make their way through the various level of the "treehouse", BSA's cyber-champion mascot, Garret the Ferret, leads them through games and activities that illustrate smart cyber behavior.

BSA's website, www.playitcybersafe.com, offers fact sheets, research studies, a Cyber Ethics Champion Code and Cyber Ethics Champion certificate, articles and educational curricula. BSA's first cyber ethics curriculum, "Play It Safe in Cyberspace," and a four-page comic book curriculum, "Copyright Crusader to the Rescue," and teacher's guides, all available for free download. They are widely used by parents and teachers to assist in conversations with elementary and middle school-age children about responsible cyber behavior. Both curricula were co-produced by children's publisher, Weekly Reader. The Play It Safe in Cyberspace curriculum has reached more than 13 million kids, parents and teachers since it was first distributed in August 2002 to schools nationwide. The Copyright Crusader comic book and teacher's guide were initially mailed to 30,000 fourth grade teachers. As a result, more than one million kids and two million parents and guardians have utilized the curriculum.