Keeping Myself eSafe
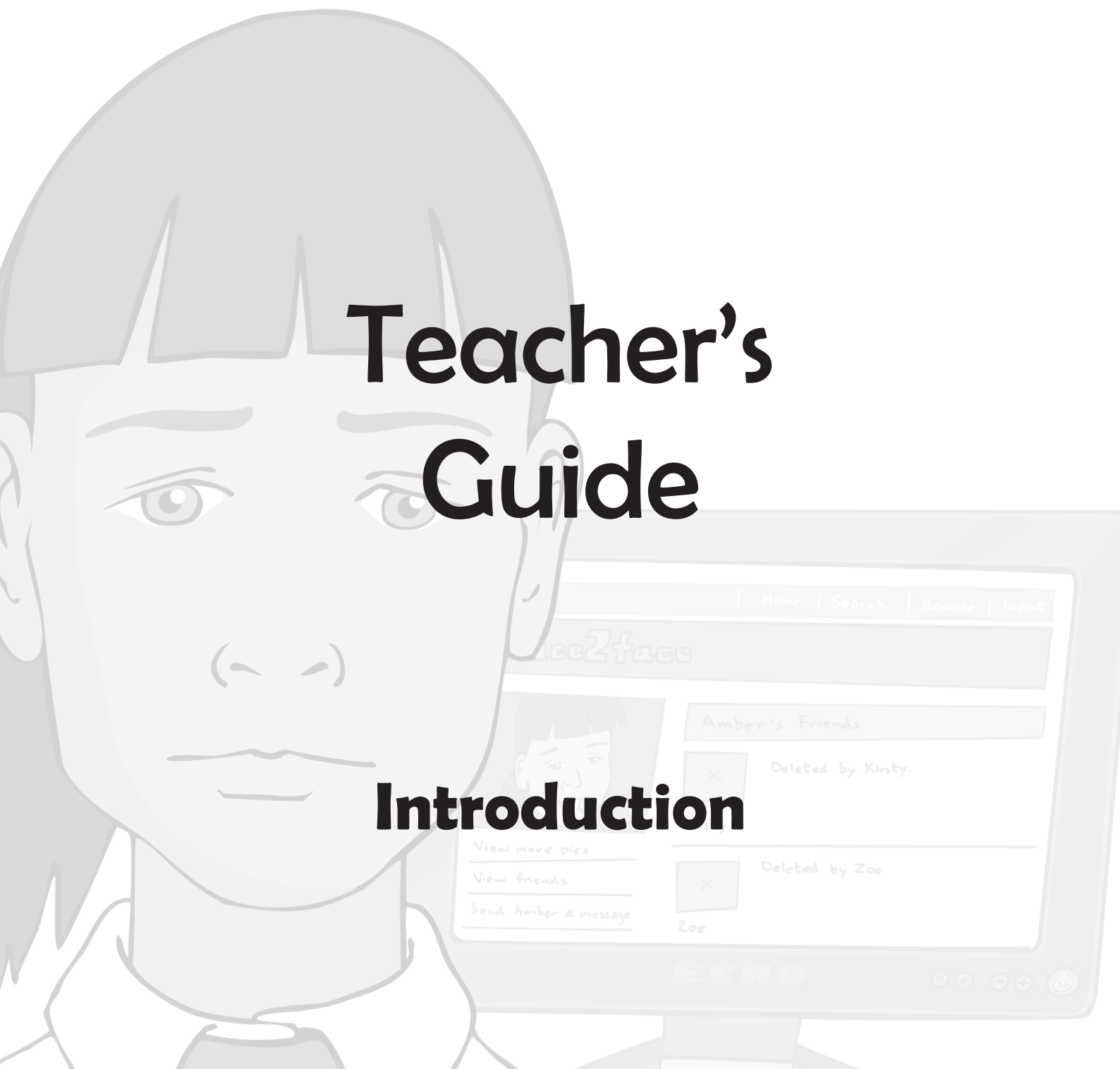
Teacher's Guide

Introduction

The internet revolution

Rapid advances in digital technology have created new and exciting ways for children and young people to learn. The internet revolution has also transformed the way in which young people communicate through interactive services such as chat, messaging and online games.

But unlike previous generations of internet users, today's children are no longer passive recipients of online information. The new digital technologies have enabled them to become creators of digital content, using social software tools to communicate, collaborate and socialise with others. Bebo, YouTube, MSN, iTunes and MySpace are examples of technologies that play a significant role in the daily lives of children and young people.

At the same time, advances in technology have resulted in a much greater accessibility to these services from fixed and mobile devices, such as phones, laptops, MP3 players and PCs. The new generation of mobile phones enables young people to access a wide range of increasingly sophisticated digital services through a single handset.

E-safety

Alongside the huge legitimate benefits the internet offers however, there is the potential for young people to be exposed to situations and risks that may compromise their personal safety.

One of the most powerful features of the internet - the capacity to search for information – also represents one of the most significant safety issues. Children can easily be exposed to material that is offensive or illegal. Young people who enjoy playing games online may also be viewing content that is inappropriate to their age, frequently without the knowledge of their parents.

The advances in social networking technologies present opportunities for cyberbullying or harassment and, most seriously, for sexual predators to make approaches in chat rooms or via instant messaging, with the intention of grooming children for sexual abuse.

As internet users become increasingly dependent on services such as online shopping and banking, this creates opportunities for criminal activities such as fraud and identity theft. Phishing - a fraudulent attempt to acquire personal information such as user names, passwords and bank details - represents a growing and serious threat to the security of internet users.

Research shows that young people are frequently unable to differentiate between what is genuine advertising and what is not. Junk email or spam may provide offers that sound too good to be missed, while many children find premium-rate services on mobile phones difficult to resist, sometimes with serious financial consequences.

Cyber plagiarism and breaches of intellectual copyright are also growing issues. The emergence of sophisticated file sharing technologies has enabled internet users to download music, films and games, and such activities can have serious moral, legal and financial consequences.

Finally, there is the risk that some children become so obsessed with new technology and spend so much time online, that the quality and frequency of contact with friends and family diminishes.

E-safety education

Schools have a duty to help children and young people remain safe when online, whether inside or outside school. They have a vital role in helping children to become informed users of online services, so that they can develop their own set of safe and discriminating behaviours.

By developing knowledge and skills that enable them to use and enjoy the internet safely, young people are better protected, regardless of how digital technologies and their associated risks might evolve in the future.

Keeping Myself e-Safe addresses many of the key safety issues affecting children and young people today. The stories in this resource, together with the accompanying teaching and learning materials, help young people explore these issues and develop greater e-safety awareness.

E-safety - issues and themes

The issues/themes covered in Keeping Myself e-Safe are as follows:

- Internet forums and chat rooms
- Online grooming
- Social networking
- Instant messaging and chat
- Peer pressure and risky behaviours
- Security of personal information, user IDs and passwords
- Flame wars
- Cyberbullying
- Happy slapping
- Distribution of inappropriate images
- Peer-to-peer networks and file sharing systems
- Cyber plagiarism and cyber cheating
- Premium telephone services
- Phishing, identify theft and online fraud
- Spam and adware
- Viruses, malware, and data mining
- Addictive behaviours

Animated Stories

Keeping Myself e-Safe contains animated stories which are narrated by young people. Each story has been designed to promote discussion and raise awareness of e-safety issues affecting the lives of young people. These scenarios can be either be viewed online, or on DVD format.

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Teaching and learning materials

A set of teaching and learning materials are provided for each of the animated stories. Each set contains:

- A lesson plan
- A synopsis
- Resources required
- Learning objectives
- Lesson outline
- Questions for discussion
- Extended activities

Information for Teachers

Additional sections of this guide provide information and advice for teachers relating to key areas of e-safety. Each section:

a) explains the nature of a digital technology or online service and how it is used

b) identifies potential risks to the safety of young people

c) outlines appropriate safety strategies and behaviours

The information sections for teachers are:

- Using the internet
- Communication technology
- Social networking
- Mobile and video technologies
- File sharing
- Cyber plagiarism
- Online gaming
- Cyberbullying
- Internet addiction