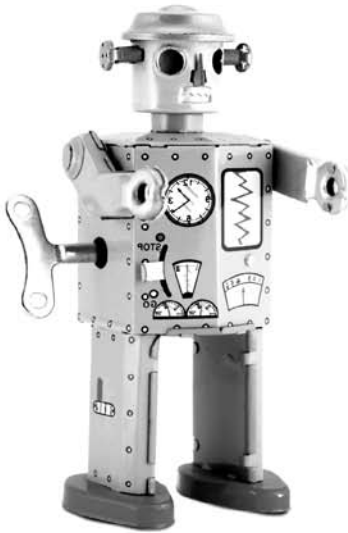


# CLOSING THE

# TECHGAP:



## EDUCATING AND ENABLING PARENTS TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN

**C**hildren are inherently more adept in understanding and using technology than their parents: this causes a technical generation gap or TechGap. With the Internet the gap has become a chasm, in large part because of the huge discrepancy in the amount of time children and parents spend online. Research shows children spend nearly 20 hours a week on the Internet.<sup>1</sup> Parents average significantly less time and are put at a severe disadvantage when it comes to understanding how the Internet works and what children can use it for.

The effects of the TechGap are horrifying. Children can take advantage of the Internet to access depraved pornographic and shocking violent content, easily bypassing parental controls and protections meant to prevent such exposure.

### **TechGap Solutions**

How can we bridge the TechGap? The solution must involve work not just on the part of parents, but significant outreach efforts by the tech industry and other stakeholders.

*Parents:* Parents who are concerned must be willing to educate themselves about the problem. They must be willing to speak openly with their children about the dangers of the Internet and what is acceptable Internet behavior in their home.

*Tech Industry Responsibility:* The tech industry must do a better job of letting parents know what, where, and how their children can access the Internet. It may be appropriate for unconventional web devices like the PSP, iPods, and cell phones to come with warning labels that inform parents of the gadget's web accessibility. These devices should also come with parental control options, just as computers do. These controls are certainly not a perfect solution, but can be useful to some families. The tech industry should also be involved in developing and funding educational programs that are part of aggressive outreach efforts to parents.

The industry must also take responsibility to develop and create better parental controls and technologies that give the consumer choices and control, similar to the CP80 Internet Zoning Initiative. Efforts to self-regulate

would also be welcome.

**Education:** The CP80 Foundation developed free training courses to educate parents. These courses include simple explanations of how the Internet works, what parents can do to protect their families, and tricks utilized by kids to skirt parental controls and protections.

CP80 is also encouraging states to establish "Close the TechGap" educational programs that may be offered through public schools or libraries. These will empower parents with the necessary tools to stay on top of what their children are doing.

**Legislation:** In the event that self-regulation is not possible, or does not happen, appropriate legislation may be necessary to assist in closing the TechGap. Restrictions may be placed on free wireless hotspots or on open proxies in order to ensure no inappropriate access by minors.

**We Can Do It**

The TechGap is real. A recent survey found that more than 50% of children say they've bought something online. 70% of parents say their children have never

bought anything on the Internet.<sup>2</sup> Children are more capable and knowledgeable than parents give them credit for; technology is more invasive and prevalent than parents believe. We must recognize this as a real problem if we are to effectively address it.

Working together, parents, the tech industry and consumer-advocate groups like CP80 can help each other understand what is needed and expected to provide a better Internet experience for all. Parents should do all they can to understand the Internet and the technology industry must include parents as an integral part of all technology offerings aimed at children.

**CHILDREN CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INTERNET TO ACCESS DEPRAVED PORNOGRAPHIC AND SHOCKING VIOLENT CONTENT, EASILY BYPASSING PARENTAL CONTROLS AND PROTECTIONS MEANT TO PREVENT SUCH EXPOSURE**

**Footnotes:**

1 Kids internet safety starts at home. WebMD. CBSNews.com, June 6, 2007. Accessed online June

6, 2007 at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/06/05/health/webmd/main2890206.shtml>.

2 State of Internet Security. Webroot Software. Accessed online June 6, 2007 at [http://www.webroot.com/pdf/Webroot\\_SoIS\\_Q0207.pdf](http://www.webroot.com/pdf/Webroot_SoIS_Q0207.pdf).

**Sexually Abused**

**Fired for Viewing Porn**

**Raped & Murdered**

**Divorced**

**Forced into Sex Slavery**

**How Is Internet Pornography Affecting Your Country?**

Countries with an increased usage of the Internet have an increase in problems related to pornography abuse.

**The CP80 Internet Channel Initiative Can Solve the Internet Pornography Problem**

The unregulated nature of Internet pornography is destroying our children, our families and our communities. The time to make the Internet safer and more responsible is now. Get educated and get involved.

Visit [www.cp80.org](http://www.cp80.org) to learn how you can help.

**CP80**  
Internet Channel Initiative