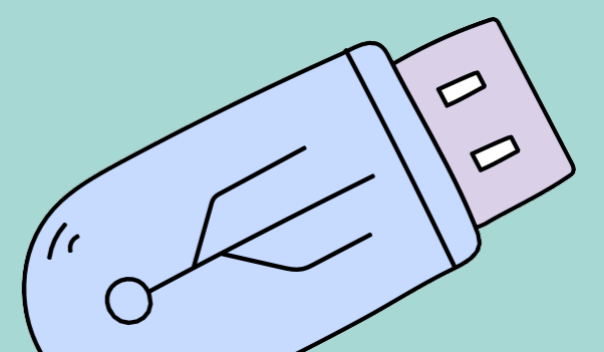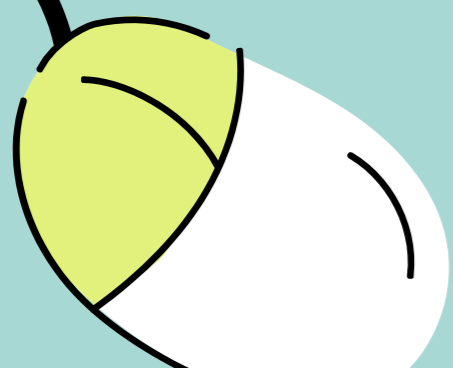# Cyber Safety Tips >>> For Librarians

Understanding the ways that teenagers interact with and utilize online platforms will forever be a topic of interest to libraries and librarians as we progress further into the information age,especially considering the speed in which the online world changes.

Recognizing our role in online safety is necessary if we want to teach our youth the endless possibilities of the internet.

Some libraries lend WIFI routers, allowing patrons to fulfill their informational needs themselves in the comfort of their own home. There is also space for youth to engage with the Internet within the library via computers, gaming consoles, tablets, and other tech. Even our programs require youth to utilize the digital space.

Librarians can serve as a support system for both youth and their parents by teaching safe online practices in the library and promoting safe internet use when outside of the library.

Let's take a closer look at some of the recommendations for librarians on navigating Internet safety:

01

Recognize that different age groups will have different risks.

Acknowledging and understanding the different risks to each age group is pivotal to keeping everyone safe and up to date. Apps will differ depending on age.

02

Be a safe space for teens to turn to.

Conversations regarding cyberbullying, online luring, and sexual exploitation are all possible threats to teenagers online.

Letting youth know that library staff are people they can talk to for help is beneficial to the library and to the relationships that are being built.

03

Have library staff be ready for open and honest conversations.

The library is a space to find information and we are there to guide patrons to the correct sources, but sometimes the questions will be difficult! *All* staff must be prepared for *all* questions.

04

Continually build upon cyber safety knowledge.

Just because we learned it once, doesn't mean we can't learn it again! Referencing internet safety tips previously learned, such as not sharing personal information online, again doesn't hurt anyone.

Cyber caution continued:

05

Have a teen zone.

Designate a library space just for teens that includes access to tech such as desktops and laptops. Place posters and materials that outline internet safety and library conduct on computers around the space.

02

Don't forget the parents!

Librarians act as intermediaries. We can help serve our teen community by providing access to the same internet safety tips to parents/caregivers and our adult patrons as well.

Surf safely.
Some further readings and tips:

Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. (2023). *Protect Kids Online*. **https://protectkidsonline.ca/app/en/**
Protect Kids Online is a great resource for librarians, and divides internet safety by age group.

Canadian Centre for Childhood Protection. (2022). *Need Help Now.* **https://needhelpnow.ca/app/en/**
Need Help Now is a Canadian resource specifically designed to help young people deal with removing explicit images from the Internet, cyber bullying, and moments of online crisis.

American Library Association. (2014). FAQ about libraries, children, and the Internet. **https://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/WOissues/techinttele/internetsafety/faq.htm**
The American Library Association is a resource for both young people, parents, and librarians. They focus on the ways that libraries can raise internet safety and knowledge on cyber safety.