Cybercitizen Challenge

CyberSense and Nonsense

Guiding level: Brownies / Guides

Topic: Ethics and authenticating online information

This activity requires an Internet connection.

In this activity girls visit the MediaSmarts Web site to play CyberSense and Nonsense: The Second Adventure of the Three CyberPigs. (http://mediasmarts.ca/game/cybersense-and-nonsense-second-adventure-three-cyberpigs)

This educational game teaches kids about online etiquette (or "Netiquette") and about the importance of double-checking information they encounter on the Internet.

Preparation

- Photocopy the handout *Netiquette: It's Easy!* (one copy per girl).
- Go through the game yourself, so that you are familiar with it before the meeting.

At Your Meeting

- *CyberSense and Nonsense* comes with audio, but beginner readers may need to be paired with more advanced readers.
- Once the girls have played the game, talk about what they have learned through the CyberPig's experiences in the game.
- Finish the activity by reading and discussing the handout *Netiquette: It's Easy!*

Netiquette – It's Easy!

Nobody likes to be treated disrespectfully. This is true in the real world and on the Internet.

The principles of netiquette (online manners) are easy to learn. Just remember these five simple rules when you're chatting, e-mailing and instant messaging.

Rule 1: Play nicely with others
The first rule of netiquette is to treat others with respect. Never use language that is aggressive, rude or hateful. Avoid using capital letters – it's like **YELLING** at someone. It's better to use symbols to communicate your emotions.

Rule 2: Respect people's privacy
Some websites will ask you to give them e-mail addresses of friends and family, but it's not a good idea to do this without asking them first. Neither is it a good idea to forward an e-mail without asking permission from the sender.

Rule 3: Know your audience
While your friends won't mind if you abbreviate words, use slang or make a few spelling errors, use a more formal style of writing when corresponding with teachers or other professionals.

Rule 4: Just the facts
When you have an ongoing e-mail conversation with someone, avoid re-sending the whole message when you reply. Keep your message brief and be sure to fill in the "subject" in the message heading.

Rule 5: Don't spam your friends
Don't forward e-mail chain letters or spam (electronic junk mail) – you're just passing on the clutter to someone else. No one needs these messages – as well as being a nuisance, they are prime spreaders of rumours and computer viruses.