

**BOOK CHAPTER | Safe Cyber Spaces****Parenting in The Digital Era – Safer Cyber Spaces for Kids****Sadiq Nasir****Department of Information Systems & Computing****American University of Nigeria****Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria****E-mail: sadiq.nasir@edu.aun.ng****Phone: +2348061562786****Abstract**

This chapter contributes to the cybersecurity conversation around being a parent in the digital era. We briefly examined parenting Styles, the intuitive nature of Digital technologies and their implications on children's development if not properly harnessed. Different people adopt different approaches. Regardless of the parenting style, parents need to be better involved with children in the digital era.

All content should be accessed based on the child's age, who is the user in this case. Some possible damages include getting access to pornographic content, which is not suitable for their age. For a mobile device android based or Apple devices, several software applications can be downloaded to help restrict or limit what is being accessed. There is no silver bullet to protecting kids when it comes to parenting in the digital age. A silver bullet does not exist in the parenting domain; however, one needs to navigate and find what works best. However, all parents need to develop an interest in current trends.

**Keywords:** Parenting, Digital Technologies, Children, Intuitiveness, Impact, Era, Kids.

**Introduction**

Technological devices serve as tools to enable us to carry out our business and private functions with greater ease—the proliferation of mobile devices in the hands of children is commonplace in various households. These gadgets are consistently in demand and at the hands of children. We should, therefore, never underestimate what they can and cannot do with these devices. Parents need to take charge of their children's interaction with the technological devices (Crepax, 2022). IT devices have been designed to be intuitive; children quickly find their way around them (Papadakis, 2017). No one teaches them how to use these gadgets in many cases. Technology has enabled us to reconnect with children, and it can be used as a tool for learning and so much more.

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Every concerned parent needs interest concern on how the children use these devices. Several tips and techniques can help parents better manage the way kids interact with these devices. Having access to Google and YouTube can be very dangerous for kids at a certain age. There is much content out there that have age restrictions.

These restrictions are put in place to regulate the various age brackets that can access. There is a lot of good quality content that can help children develop better as a person in terms of academic and personal development. There is a lower level of cybersecurity awareness in the developing nations, especially in Nigeria Nasir (2020). The low level of cybersecurity awareness also affect parents in Nigeria.

Parenting comes in various styles; these are Authoritative, Authoritarian (or Disciplinary), Permissive (or Indulgent), Neglectful (or Uninvolved) Singh, S. (2017). All these types of parenting are individualised. Different people adopt different approaches. Regardless of the parenting style, parents need to be better involved with children in the digital era.

### **Kids in Cyber Space**

All content should be accessed based on the child's age, who is the user in this case. Possible damages include getting access to pornographic content (Lim, 2017), which is not suitable for their age. Another danger here is that kids' excessive screen time could result in weight gain due to less physical activity, amongst other mental health concerns. Children need to have allocated time when they have access to digital tools; it should not be all the time. Cyberbullying takes various shapes and forms.

There are growing concerns that children are being cyberbullied through social media. A lot of parent and children are not even aware it is happening, and the person carrying out the act sometimes have no idea how hurtful it is on the victim. A simple example is when someone takes an inappropriate picture of another person without permission and uploads it on social media for fun. This act surely can upset the victim, causing embarrassment and can result in low self-esteem.



**Fig 1: Kids in Cyberspace**

**Source:** <http://wcmagazines.com/kids-teens-family/kids-in-cyberspace/>

## Safe Cyber Space For Kids

For a mobile device android based or Apple devices, several software applications can be downloaded to help restrict or limit what is being accessed. Another means for the restriction is to set parental controls on the device is a setting present tall all devices (setting > parental control).



Source: <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/family-safety/internet-safety-for-kids/>

The parents need to relate with the child and develop an interest in what the children do with the devices. In addition, the following rule of thumbs will support safer cyberspaces for kids:

- ❖ For younger children is helpful to have screen times by limiting the number of times in a week or during the day they can access the device will help to regular what they do online, and also, it will allow them to grow up without the distraction of devices.
- ❖ It's essential to teach the children not to give out personal information, especially those with access to social media platforms.
- ❖ Learn to communicate with the children; they need to learn what they should do and not do online.
- ❖ Above all, develop a better relationship with the children to understand life as they navigate the world.
- ❖ It is essential to know the friend your children are friends with in real life; importantly, when they start making friends in the virtual world, the same rule applies. For the kids on social media, the parents need to follow them to watch proceedings.
- ❖ When you allow the children to use the device, make it a habit of waiting for things of their interest to supervise that is being watched when possible.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

In Conclusion, there is no silver bullet to protecting kids when it comes to parenting in the digital age. A silver bullet does not exist in the parenting domain; however, one needs to navigate and find what works best. However, all parents need to develop an interest in current trends. To be aware of the various methodology for child protection, especially the tool/app base approach. Technology is a means to an end and should not be an end by itself.

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