

Staying safe online

Some of the newer mobile phones, including Bluetooth and WiFi enabled phones, can be plugged into computers and used to download pictures and other files. Many phones are also able to access the internet. This means that, like a computer, a mobile can be used to look at websites or take part in chat room conversations. It can also be used to send and receive emails. This can be very handy. But it also raises some of the concerns that parents have about the internet, such as young people seeing adult content and visiting unsupervised chat rooms.

O2 is working hard to make the internet a safer place for young people. All of the public chat forums on O2 are moderated, but not all private forums are controlled in this way.

Young people should always take care when using a private chat room, which is a one-to-one chat that is often not moderated and may be used by an adult looking to befriend or meet a young person.

When it comes to web surfing, O2 offers a service called Parental Control. With Parental Control, we can limit the web access of a mobile phone to a small number of sites that are suitable for young people. We make sure that the providers of these sites moderate any chat rooms they have to make them as safe as possible.

Parental Control is quick and easy to activate. You can do it when you buy a new phone for your child, but you can also do it if you pass them down an old one.

 See page 27.

Talking points

A few things you might like to remind your children about when they are online:

- Try to make sure that your online friends are genuine and keep away from chatters who are sometimes dishonest. Have they claimed to be 14 years old one day and 18 years old the next, for example?
- People in chat rooms sometimes ask personal questions. You don't have to give chat friends any information that you're not happy to pass on.
- It's especially important that you don't give out your mobile number or your address or any details about your school. You would not share this information with a stranger on the street. It's better to be vague by saying, 'I live in the UK', rather than saying the name of the place you live.