

ONLINE SAFETY TOOLKIT FOR ADOLESCENTS IN RURAL NEPAL

TOOLKIT AND RESEARCH BY HAMRO PALO
WITH THE SUPPORT OF PEOPLE IN NEED

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Introduction to online safety and digital hygiene



Kunjana Ghimire Suntali, Actress And Social Worker, Nepal:

Social media can teach us about different global issues up close and could be used as a learning platform. Especially adolescents can use it to identify which career has the best potential and how to pursue education accordingly. Social media has both negative and positive impacts, but when we use it safely there can be a lot of benefit.

New technologies' presence is growing and using the internet becomes part of everyday life in Nepal. Instead of shying away from conversation about them, we want to equip adolescents with tools and skills to keep them safe. Social media and internet can be an opportunity for development, learning, and growth. For families with relatives working and living abroad, social media is the most common way to stay connected and nurture bonds. Access to media through connected mobile devices also enables users to reach better education, economic and social benefits. But it can also be a space for online abuse and violence, source of many risks for the youngest users.

This Online Safety Toolkit promotes digital hygiene: how to stay safe while using the internet. It identifies positive uses of online resources, maps threats and provide ways for adolescents and adults to work together for a safer digital environment. The Online Safety Toolkit is a joint effort of Hamro Palo and People in Need to provide tools in order to use the internet in the smartest, most creative and safest way possible.

The online safety relies on interviews conducted with 13-17 year old 59 respondents in November and December 2017 in rural areas of Nepal. Most of the interviewed youth learned how to use the internet at the age of 14; some early adopters reported starting use at age 12. They likely represent a digital self learning experience. The majority of respondents have their own Facebook accounts where they are connected with friends of friends, and some people that they have not always met in person. On average, youth reported using the internet on mobile devices for around two hours a day. It is common to share the same mobile device with other members of the family. In remote territory and outside of schools, mobile internet use is more common than computers.

Unsafe use of social media and internet can be related to risks such as early marriage, sexual abuse, harassment, bullying, human trafficking and other forms of violence. Digital hygiene means to take care of yourself and your digital behaviours in a similar way as looking out for your health, well being and protection. Digital safety is very important to think about every time you connect

online, especially for younger people. Whereas access and know how might differ between rural and city areas, the identified risks and safety recommendations can apply to most of social media and web users in the country.

Opportunities of new technologies in learning and online communication

- Using online resources can take you to useful and free of charge e-libraries, curriculum e-books, e-learning platforms, video tutorials, online encyclopedia, dictionary, forums.
- Internet allows to find information and learn about science, art, culture, history, practice new languages, play new instruments, sing, dance, write poetry, learn air hostessing and many more.
- Those interested in media, political and social issues can read global and local news in politics, culture, sport. There are many entertaining ways to develop new skills, play education games and contribute to responsible citizenship. In the fields of entertainment or journalism, promoting your activity online opens up opportunities to reach new audiences.
- Among almost 2 billion global users of Facebook, there are over 6 million users of Facebook in Nepal.
- In addition to school curriculum, digital literacy skills can later boost career development or support building your own business.
- Information Technology (IT): coding, robotics and web design are other ways to increase creativity.
- As long as you don't spend most of your time online,, you stay curious but share the activity with close friends, trusted adults and family members, you can take advantage of all those resources.
- Digital hygiene prevents from excessive use of online devices and addictions to games or social media. See below what digital hygiene means and how to stay safe online.



Where can you find useful information and access learning platforms?

Search engines, social media (examples):

Google , Yahoo , Bing	Search for world's information
YouTube	Watch channels about science, history, art and tutorials, i.e. guitar playing
Wikipedia	Largest free online encyclopedia
News online	Onlinekhabar is a portal with Nepali headlines, Annapurna Post and Ekantipur are national media
Facebook , Instagram , Twitter , Viber , IMO , Whatsapp , Snapchat , WeChat	Social media and messaging apps

Binita Shrestha, Software Engineer And Co-Founder/CEO Of Wistem, Kathmandu:

The first time I saw a computer, I was 10 years old. We used to have computer class from grade 4. I could clearly remember the dark room with rows of computers. We learned MS-DOS which was fun to run the commands. Since high school I was interested in new technologies and science. I decided to pursue my dream and study Bachelor of Engineering in Information Technology (BEIT) to become a developer. Coding is my passion and also a career in Kathmandu. Together with Women in STEM Nepal (STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), I encourage all young girls and boys to learn with resources that are available online, reach out to education games, discover tutorials and e-learning platforms. If you are curious, creative and aware of the risks that are connected with the use of internet and social media, you can learn new skills wherever you are.

Online tutorials, e-learning platforms, mobile apps (examples):

Khan Academy	Enroll for webinar classes to learn new languages and science among others
E-Pustakalaya	Free and open digital library with Nepali and foreign authors
Dictionary	Learn English
Midas e-Class	Tutorials of mathematics, science and environment, health education
KULLABS SmartSchool	Courses of business & technology, mathematics, science, social studies

Major threats and case stories of adolescent behaviours

- Sexual harassment: Story of Samita, 13*
Samita's older sister was working in the Gulf. This is why her brother helped her open a Facebook account to stay in touch. The same account was also used by her mother, who unknowingly accepted a couple of requests from strangers. Samita started receiving inappropriate pictures on Messenger. She asked her mother what to do next. She heard that ignoring might help. But only her brother advised her to block those people who sent the pictures, which ended the abusive situation. Later Samita explained to her mother that it would be better not to accept anymore requests and perhaps to open her own account to stay connected with all family members. Another time, Samita and two of her girlfriends from school received

inappropriate pictures from one of the classmates. He continued to send images of naked adults that he probably found online. The three girls decided to make copies of those messages, just in case they needed to report it officially, and went first to confront him together. When they saw him in person, they said: Hey! If you do not stop sending such offensive pictures, we will tell the teachers of the school. He said he didn't know this act was offensive, apologised and didn't send anymore messages of this sort.

Online sexual harassment is a situation when someone receives an unwanted sexual attention, such as unwanted pictures, videos, posts, chats, emails or messages. It can lead to blackmail. For the victim it can result in feelings of shame, guilt, depression, anxiety, and exploitation.

- **Early marriage:** Story of Sandip and Roshika, 15* Sandip had a 16 year old cousin, Roshika who told him that she once met a 17 year old handsome boy on a bus. They quickly started talking on Viber. He offered to give her a brand new phone and asked her to come see him in his village. Roshika was considering the idea to elope with him. She told Sandip that she is falling in love with this boy because he writes her beautiful poems and sends them on the chat. Early on Sandip realised this was going too fast and convinced his cousin that it might lead to early marriage, which is illegal and has many negative consequences. She was still young and didn't really know him. He suggested to call this boy. They all met instead in a neutral place. That is when Roshika discovered that he was much older and already had a family. She was disappointed and from there on she cut any contact with him. Thanks to this experience, both Sandip and Roshika learned how to be more careful about meeting people online.
- Online platforms can sometimes fuel **early marriage**. For example when someone befriends another person and presents themselves in a certain way, the other person might think they are attracted to them and want to elope. This is not safe, as knowing people online is not the same as knowing people offline. Early marriage has many negative consequences: usually dropping out of school, possible health complications, many underage brides are also at higher risk of violence. To stay safe, be careful who you talk to online and don't trust strangers online.



Sujan Ghimire, Nepali Language Teacher, Sindhupalchok
I encourage my students to use the internet for learning. I think digital literacy would be a useful tool to have within schools because the access and use of more digital resources is increasing nowadays. Social media such as Facebook are bringing people together, connecting them and their knowledge globally. That is why it is such an important tool. But I also hear a lot of stories about online threats, especially fake ID. We should be careful when we receive invitations on social media from people with beautiful profile pictures and double check their name first. The best way to stay safe is to always verify their identity and ignore the strangers. I also hear about fraudulent calls and bluff calls made to young girls and boys. I think a way to protect themselves is not to engage in conversations when asked for their personal information or invited to meet offline, without any supervision. In cases of online misconduct from the behalf of adults in my village, I am happy to help. I did confront a person once who was misbehaving towards one of my students. I made a call and told him to stop sending inappropriate messages.

Arjun be more confident in talking to his parents and going back to school again.

Cyberbullying is when a person or a group is addressing mean, upsetting or violent messages to someone else. It can be a private conversation or a public comment. It is harmful because online it provides a sense of anonymity for the bullies. It may also make the victim feel that it is her fault, guilt associated with a feeling of shame. But it is not your fault, even if sometimes it could be a matter of misread intentions. A straightforward reaction to a painful comment can make the situation even worse. In such case, ignore and don't reply to the bully who may eventually not find anymore motivation to continue having power over someone else or of being mean to you. A bully is usually looking for an audience. In the same time make sure to have evidence before you block the person. Reach out to a trusted adult. Don't keep it to yourself because it is more difficult to seek for help, if kept as a secret. Likewise, don't send mean messages to anybody else. If you see anyone bullying someone else and it is safe - react. Tell the bully to stop, tell them you will report them.

- Cyber bullying (also known as Hepai in Nepali): Story of Arjun, 14*
- For many months Arjun was bullied by others in school, he was constantly laughed at and called names. He started receiving private messages on IMO with scolding him for his appearance. Bullies were saying that he seemed different from other boys in his class because of his modest clothing. After awhile, he started falling into depression and almost dropped out from school. His brother noticed something was wrong and talked to him. Together they agreed to ignore bad comments and not to reply to them. They copied the offensive messages and went to see Arjun's teacher to show her the abusive content. Arjun's teacher talked to the class without pointing out names and asked the bullying to stop. This intervention stopped the abusive behaviour, helped
- Human Trafficking: Story of Akhima, 16*
Akhima wanted to study nursing in New Delhi. She went on an online forum to see how she could apply for college. Later she received an invitation from a medicine student on Facebook. He seemed very nice and also had a background from a village in the same district. They started talking on Facebook Messenger. She realised he was asking a lot of questions about her pictures and common friends. He promised to help her find a lucrative job to sponsor her studies. She reached out to another friend to find out if they were in fact acquainted. Before she got a reply, she decided to visit Kathmandu to gather more information about the job offer and that is when she found herself in a

strange house. She did not feel comfortable when the people there asked her for her ID and decided to leave. She did not feel safe. Before she knew what was going on, her documents were taken away from her. But suddenly a police raid entered the house. They rescued her before she was taken away to India. It later appeared that her friend alerted the police herself because she could not recognise the name of the person Akhima mentioned before departing from her home.

Human trafficking is when someone is forced or tricked to be recruited for criminal reasons including among others, cases of prostitution, forced labour, slavery or the removal of organs. It involves an illegal way of transferring children, women and men in your country and abroad. Human trafficking is an issue not directly connected with online presence in Nepal. However many traffickers are now using messaging apps and social media to mislead the most vulnerable populations but also to convince those who are more educated and in search of new life opportunities. Traffickers know how to use technology, how to market, recruit, sell, and exploit people for criminal purposes. You can protect yourself from it by not believing in any work and education related promise coming online from an unverified source or someone you don't know very well. It could be both, friends of the family but especially strangers who want to convince you to leave your house to meet in person. Treat invitations to travel alone without anybody else's knowledge as suspicious.

Tools to stay safe online and reporting

Community measures are effective for online cases of abuse: Warn the bully that you will not be silent and reach out to your friends, family or teacher. You can say: "What you are doing is bullying / harassment. It is illegal and harmful. If you don't stop, I

will tell my teacher and you will be in trouble."

Warn the bully about reporting the case to District Police Units for Women and Children and report it to Community Police. You can say: "What you are doing is bullying / harassment. It is illegal and harmful and you can get in big trouble for it. I'm warning you - if you don't stop, I'll report you to the police and Women and Children Office."

Warn the bully about reporting the case to Child Protection Units, teachers and parents.

Rojina, Class 9, Sindhupalchowk:

I don't share my password with others, I ask for consent to post pictures of friends, I maintain privacy for "only me" on my personal information and log out after using any device. These are the measures to make my account safe.

DIGITAL HYGIENE EVERYDAY: GENERAL PRINCIPLES TO STAY SAFE ONLINE

- With a creative and smart use of the internet, you can learn new things and communicate with people. Always verify several times an information that you see on the internet because it might not be true.
- Treat everything you do online as potentially public. Imagine that your personal message can be later seen by all the school friends, parents and teachers. Someone could post your picture on a public forum.
- Don't do anything online that you would not do offline. Don't send pictures or information that could be compromising later. Don't share nude and semi-naked pictures or videos of yourself. Don't engage in "pic to pic" and sexual related conversations online.
- Think about the person who is writing to you. Are you certain that you know him/her or their intentions? Avoid

accepting invitations from people you don't know and talking to strangers.

- When you feel threatened, you can ignore, block, engage and report any person that could be harmful.
- Make your voice public in comments. That way you can get help and support from others in your community. However, think before you send or post anything online.
- While in front of a mobile phone or computer, don't forget to take regular breaks.
- Remember to switch off your webcam when you are not using it.
- You can choose what you would like to be posted and seen on your social media profile. Your privacy settings allow you to limit the option of tagging you by others on pictures, that you might not like.
- Be engaged: ask your friends for permission to take and publish their pictures.
- Be aware: your search history on the web (browser) can be viewed by the next user of the device.
- Protect your mobile device and computer by updating your antivirus programs and avoiding sharing personal information and passwords.
- If you take a selfie, never reveal your school uniform or the background of your location.
- Be careful when you share a mobile phone with others. Avoid misuse of your information. Asking someone at a cyber cafe to help you set up an account is not safe, if you need help, ask a trusted friend or a family member.
- Help your peers and community. If you know how to safely search for information online and report issues that your friends might encounter, advise them how to protect themselves, support your peers in reporting threats and react to offensive comments. Explain to your trusted adults how you communicate, help them understand how it works. Engage and share your knowledge.

- Be careful not to become dependant of the number of friends that you have on your social media profiles or the number of likes that you could get for a picture or post. Commenting and sharing interesting news with your peers could be an actual and meaningful input instead.



DIGITAL SAFETY: FIRST STEPS

- Engage: in response to suspicious messages say you will report the case of abuse, reach out for help and make it public
- Keeping it only to yourself will make it worse: most important is to say something to someone you trust.
- Collect evidence: make screenshots and print messages and pictures that you received
- Block: blacklist the person who is harassing you
- Ignore: don't reply to the first threats and avoid responding to blackmail
- Report: usually on social media there is a link to report messages or content which you can use when you get offensive or upsetting images or messages.. You can also tell friends and contact a trusted adult
- Talk to people that you trust, your friends and family about negative situations, tell someone:
- I found something that is disturbing on my profile. A classmate posted a picture of me and a comment about me that I don't like. A stranger is sending me abusive pictures and messages!
- If a stranger requests pictures from you, sends you offensive images or blackmails you, you can reply:
- I don't like what you are doing. This is illegal and offensive to me. If you don't stop, I will report you to the police!

PRIVACY SETTINGS: PROTECT YOURSELF

In Nepal it is legal to open social media accounts from the age of 13. Privacy means keeping restricted access to your personal information and protecting yourself. If you wish to avoid misuse of your account, don't share your password with anybody else. If you want to keep your account safe, don't publish your age and personal information on your profile(s). Remember to logout after

using any device: go to log in/log out button in the corner of your homepage. Restrict tagging options: go to "privacy settings" on your account and click view "just me". Give consent: ask beforehand if it is ok to take pictures and post them online. Expect the same from others.

How can you get help to report online threats and cases of abuse?

Call Child Helpline Nepal - 1098
Call the Police - 100 Ask for the number of your DPO and Women and Children Police Unit
Call Khabar Garaun Helpline - 1145 Report gender based violence to National Women Commission
Call Women and Children Officer - 01-4437914 and 01-4424326 Ask for the number of your local Women and Children Officer
Call Nepal Police Cyber Crime Division in Kathmandu Valley - 01-4219937/ 9851283032 Send an email to ert@nepalpolice.gov.np or ecrime@nepalpolice.gov.np

References

Online resources

- [Facebook Safety Centre](https://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/teens), online resources with [safety tools](#) for teens: <https://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/teens>
- [Google Safety Centre](https://www.google.com/safetycenter/resources/#tab=avoid-scams), online resources with [video](#) on how to avoid scams: <https://www.google.com/safetycenter/resources/#tab=avoid-scams>
- UNICEF NEPAL campaigns: [NET4GOOD](#), [#endviolence](#), [#growinguponline](#): <https://www.facebook.com/Net4GoodNepal/>
- [Internet Society ISOC Nepal](https://www.internetociety.org/tutorials/manage-your-identity/), [online privacy tutorial](#): <https://www.internetociety.org/tutorials/manage-your-identity/>
- [Women Leaders in Technology](https://www.facebook.com/wlitnepal/): <https://www.facebook.com/wlitnepal/>
- [Creation Society in Kathmandu](https://www.facebook.com/CSNepal1/): <https://www.facebook.com/CSNepal1/>
- [InSafe children protection](https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/): <https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/>

Reports

- Hamro Palo, [Gender Based Violence prevention reports](#)
- UNICEF, [Children in a Digital World report](#)
- Asia Foundation, [Gender Based Violence Mapping in Nepal report](#)
- Amnesty International, [Online Abuse Against Women report](#)
- Martin Chautari, [Legal landscape](#) and [stakeholders](#) of data connectivity report

Legal framework

- Electronic Transaction Act and Defamation Act
- Children's Act
- Right to Information Act

Learn more at

- www.peopleinneed.cz
- www.hamropalo.org

People in Need (PIN) is a Czech nonprofit, non-governmental organization founded in 1992 that implements humanitarian relief and long term development projects, educational programs, and human rights programs in crisis regions all over the world. In 2018, the organization works in over 20 countries. PIN started its operations in Nepal after the 2015 earthquakes and has since supported Nepali girls, women, men, and boys with shelter and trail reconstruction, management of camps for displaced populations, and empowerment and resilience building.

Learn more at www.peopleinneed.cz.

Hamro Palo (Our Turn in Nepali) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that formed in 2016. The program started four years earlier as girls' education and empowerment program, Her Turn. Hamro Palo is one of PIN's implementing partners in Nepal. Hamro Palo's mission is to empower adolescents and women and equip them with skills and knowledge that allow them to create their own safe and healthy futures. Hamro Palo do so by delivering culturally sensitive, services that advance adolescents' health, safety, confidence, and leadership skills. So far Hamro Palo have worked with 5660 adolescent girls in 74 schools of Sindhupalchowk and Gorkha and in 2017 with 876 adolescent boys.

Learn more at www.hamropalo.org.

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