Pointers For Parents

Helping Kids Become Good Cyber Citizens And Understand Software Compliance

(NAPSA)—Widespread computer availability at home, at school and in libraries is rapidly providing America's nearly 61 million school-age kids with unprecedented Internet access. This year, as kids log on more than ever before, a technology trade group is cautioning teachers and parents that increased online use may also lead kids to big trouble.

Although typically fun and educational, surfing the Internet nonetheless poses numerous dangers for today's students. According to the Business Software Alliance (BSA), faster and more pervasive online access not only presents a massive challenge for adults to protect kids from inappropriate or offensive online material but also from the temptation to download illegal software, music, games and other creative works.

"The U.S. Census Bureau recently reported that nine out of 10 school-age children, ages six to 17, had computer access in 2000, and all indicators are that Internet use is becoming synonymous with that access," said Laurie Head, who leads BSA's educational programs.

"Without even trying, kids can stumble across inappropriate Web sites, and sites that offer pirated software are double trouble, not only because they're illegal but also because they're sometimes linked to porn and other disturbing material. Now more than ever, it's critical that parents and teachers educate kids about good cyber citizenship and proper software use."

To steer kids clear of piracy and help them develop responsible online behaviors, BSA and Weekly Reader, an education company best known for its children's newspaper, have co-written a school curriculum for kids in grades three through eight. Teachers can use the free activity kit to lead classroom discussions about why creativity and copyright law matter,

Q: What's the difference between copying software from a friend and stealing software from a store?

A: Nothing.

COPYING SOFTWARE IS STEALING.

the dangers of unethical software use, how the $11 billion software piracy problem affects others, and why safe and legal software use is important. A companion Web site created for kids and adults, www.playitcybersafe.com, will offer more information about software piracy and other cyber crimes.

Consider these tips for talking to kids about piracy:

• **Use examples to which children can relate.** Copyright law, intellectual property and software piracy can be difficult concepts for children. Use simple examples to help kids understand that piracy is stealing. For example, would the child approve if someone stole his or her art work?

• **Describe who gets hurt.** Kids need to know that software piracy hurts many people. Honest companies lose millions of dollars each year when people don't pay for the software they use. What's more, stolen software can potentially infect the child's computer with a virus.

• **Discuss responsible Internet surfing.** Make sure you know what types of Web sites the child views. Discuss which sites are appropriate or inappropriate.

For more information on software piracy or a free teacher kit, visit www.playitcybersafe.com or call 1-888-NOPIRACY.