

Creating a Family Technology Plan

Hold a Family Council to determine rules and standards around the use of media, electronics, and the Internet. Seek direction from the Spirit as you create your family's Technology Plan. Because every family is different, decide with your family what will work best for you.

Step 1: Identify dangers that could affect your family

Take a moment to list possible technology-related dangers in the space provided below. Every family will have unique challenges, but some possible answers may include:

- Viruses or malware
- Pornography
- Cyberbullying
- Excessive online shopping
- Predators
- Video game addiction
- Identity Theft
- Wasting Time
- Invasion of Privacy
- Excessive texting

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Step 2: Identify safeguards or solutions for these dangers

For the most urgent dangers listed above, explore solutions that will provide protection for your family. Consider tools, rules, and educational solutions.

Tools	Rules	Education
Technology resources you can use to protect your family, such as content filtering tools or virus protection.	Guidelines to keep your family safe, such as "No texting while walking in the street" or "No Internet use after bedtime."	Things you teach your family to keep them safe. Education helps children make correct choices even when other defenses fail.

In the space below, list the tools, rules, education, or other solutions or safeguards your family members will use as a defense against digital dangers. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need more room. You can find an example of what these solutions might look like on page three of this booklet.



Step 3: Determine how to implement solutions in your home

Record Plans and Goals

Recording your goals and plans will allow you to easily track your progress, and will serve as a reminder to each family member of the rules and commitments they have agreed to.



For goals or actionable items, create a simple implementation plan.

- Are there tools that need to be purchased, installed, or updated?
- Are there safety rules that need to be defined or communicated?
- Are there areas of education that need to be reviewed or discussed?
- Are each family members' responsibilities identified?

Record your family's implementation plans in the space provided below. An example of a very simple implementation plan can be found on page three of this booklet.

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Who is Responsible</i>	<i>Target Date</i>



Combine safety and usage rules into a single document.

- Review these rules with each family member.
- Display the rules in a place where all family members have access to them.
- You may wish to use these rules to create an agreement for family members to sign, which allows them to use technology, the Internet, and digital devices in your home.



Find positive ways to use technology.

- Using technology with a purpose, rewarding positive behavior, and centering digital device use around uplifting objectives will help guard against digital distractions and dangers.

Set goals and make plans with your family to use technology in ways that will help you increase your knowledge, be more productive, enhance your lives, and share the gospel. Record your plans in the area below.




Follow Up

After you have implemented your technology plan, follow up occasionally to evaluate progress, review guidelines, and ensure that rules are followed.

- Check in with your spouse and children regularly to talk to them about their online friends and digital activity.
- Periodically evaluate the rules and standards you have created and make changes as necessary. Remember that technology is always changing, so your technology plan will change, too.

A Final Note

Open communication between spouses, parents, and children is the most effective solution to keeping your family safe.

-  Establish ongoing dialogue and keep lines of communication open.
-  Ensure that your children can talk to you about things on the Web that make them feel uncomfortable.
-  Make your home a safe place to talk about mistakes and find ways to prevent future problems together.

Sample Solution

DANGER: EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY OR OTHER INAPPROPRIATE MATERIAL

TOOLS

- Firewalls
- Kid-oriented search engines
- Pop-up blockers
- Virus and malware protection
- Parental controls on search engines
- Safe-mode add-ons
- Internet content filters
- TV programming locks
- Browsers for Kids

RULES

1. We will put TVs and computers in high-traffic family areas.
2. If I see something that is inappropriate I will click on the "back" button or log off immediately
3. If someone sends me pictures or emails using bad language or inappropriate images, I will not reply, and I will tell my parents.
4. I will never open attachments, click on links, or download files from people I do not know.
5. We will have an "open device" policy. Text, data, apps, and browsing history are subject to unannounced checks on all devices at any time.

EDUCATION

- Teach children about the important role intimacy plays in the plan of salvation.
- Help children understand procreation, chastity, and healthy relationships.
- Review the standards for entertainment and media in "For the Strength of Youth."

Sample Implementation Plan

Goal	Responsibility	Date
Install browser filters to block inappropriate content	Dad	8/3
Make sure our wireless home network is encrypted	Dad	8/3
Create Family "Internet Agreement" rules at next family council meeting	All	8/11
Record all user names and passwords and give them to Mom & Dad	All kids	8/11
Plan an FHE about procreation, chastity, and healthy relationships	Mom	8/12
Plan a special FHE about online integrity	Dad	8/19

Resources for Family Internet Safety

The following resources may provide additional guidance as you plan ways to protect your family and use technology and digital devices to share the gospel.

LDSTech: Internet and Family Safety

http://tech.lds.org/wiki/Family_Safety

This site contains guidelines for safe and appropriate technology usage and includes information about risks and safeguards, as well as counsel from Church leaders about Internet and media use.

Sharing the Gospel Online

<https://www.lds.org/church/share>

This site provides resources to help families focus their online interactions on sharing the gospel and their testimonies of Jesus Christ. Includes instructions on Mormon.org profiles, sharing the gospel via social media tools such as Blogs, social networks, instant messaging, and mobile phones, and centering messages on Christ.

A Parent's Guide

<https://www.lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide>

This manual focuses on teaching infants, children, and adolescents about gender, intimacy, courtship and marriage, and the purposes of earthly families.

StopCyberbullying.org*

<http://StopCyberbullying.org>

StopCyberbullying was the first cyberbullying prevention program in North America. This site explains what cyberbullying is, how to identify if a child is being bullied, and how to react calmly, take action, and prevent cyberbullying.

Overcoming Pornography

<http://www.overcomingpornography.org>

A Church-sponsored website that provides information and tips about protecting and healing families from the dangers and effects of pornography through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Mormon Channel: Tech Savvy

<http://www.mormonchannel.org/tech-savvy>

A collection of videos highlighting the latest technology, how to use it, what the Church is doing with it, and ways to use it for good. Includes segments on blogging, Internet, and Social Media as well as *Family Fun with Technology*, *Sharing Your Faith Online*, and *Parenting in the Tech Age*.

Mormon Channel: Family Conversations

<http://www.mormonchannel.org/family-conversations>

A collection of video segments that teach parents how to discuss sensitive topics such as sexual intimacy and a gospel view of sexuality with their children.

Common Sense Media*

<http://www.commonsensemedia.org/advice-for-parents/>

A website offering tips, advice, articles, and solutions for parents and families in a 24/7 media world. Includes advice by age (2-17) or entertainment type, as well as reviews of common games, movies, TV shows, apps, and other media.

Talks from General Authorities

The following talks from General Authorities may also be useful in determining how to guide and protect family members from the dangers of the digital world, as well as how to use technology to further the work of the Lord and spread the gospel throughout the world.

- *Let Our Voices Be Heard* – Elder M. Russell Ballard, Ensign, November 2003
- *Fighting Internet Filth* – Mario Hipol, Ensign, August 2005
- *Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet* – Elder M. Russell Ballard, Ensign, July 2008
- *Things as They Really Are* – Elder David A. Bednar, Ensign, June 2010

* Not a Church-sponsored site