Digital responsibility is *everybody's* responsibility

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Whatever age we are, we all have things that we need to learn, but we also have things that we can teach others. That's certainly the case when it comes to being responsible online.

Digital responsibility is yours for the taking

Whichever generation you belong to, it's easy to achieve digital responsibility. Here are ten tips that will definitely help:

Who can we learn from, and who can we teach?

In general, today's 16-24 year olds – plus or minus a couple of years – are far more savvy about technology than older family members, friends and acquaintances. As well as being more familiar with how to use apps, websites and social media, this generation also knows how to do it safely and securely and, equally importantly, responsibly. So, who better to ask for advice than someone in 'Generation Z'?

Older people, on the other hand, often have more life experience, giving them ability to know how to 'do the right thing', respect others and themselves, understand the good and bad consequences of their actions and take accountability. They can also be more cautious when it comes to trusting peopl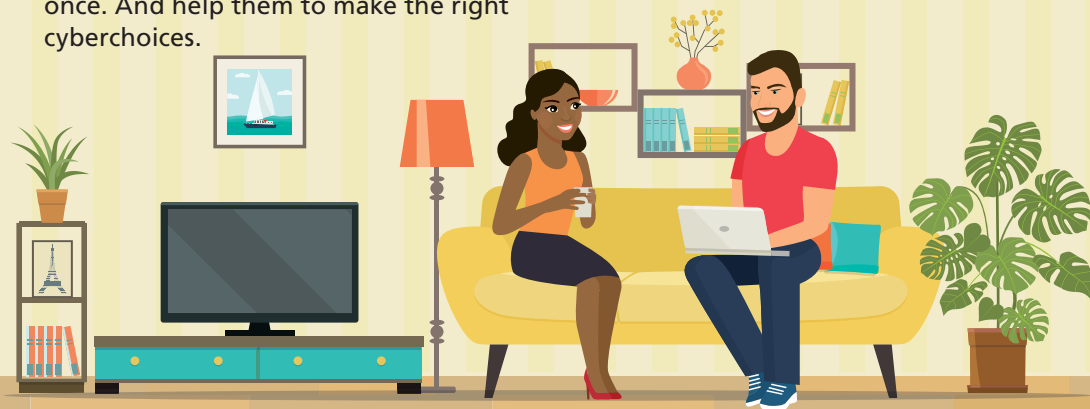e and taking risks. Life skills, if you think about it, that are so important in our digital age and should be passed down to our youngsters by 'millennials' and older generations.

Digital responsibility is something that should become second nature, however young or old we are. It means protecting ourselves from harm such as fraud or abuse, and helping others to do the same. Knowing what to share online about ourselves and others, and what to keep private. Thinking about how the things we say and do can affect ourselves and others. And making the right online choices.

- Learn how to identify emails, texts, websites, social media posts and messages that might be fraudulent or fake, or are abusive.
- Get the basics right, like using strong, unique passwords, having internet security software/apps, updating software and apps, not using public Wi-Fi when it's confidential, not clicking on random links in emails, messages and posts, and how to make safe payments.
- Think before you post or share: will posting that you're on a family holiday tell burglars that your home is empty? Will sharing explicit images or video of yourself cause problems now or in the future? Will photos of your kids embarrass them, or leave them with a digital footprint they just don't need?
- On the subject of your kids, talk to them how to use the internet safely, protect them from harm, use filters and try to maintain their innocence for as long as possible … they're only children once. And help them to make the right cyberchoices.
- Respect others: what effect will personal insults have? Do other people really want to be confronted with your political, religious, ideological or other opinions?
- Respect yourself: the best online reputation is a good reputation.
- Help, don't hide: if you think someone of another generation is doing something that could harm or simply irritate others, don't just ignore it or block them, but have the conversation.
- If you're the victim of fraud or abuse, report it: it could help to close down the fraudster or abuser and protect others.
- Know when to and not to be using your phone. Set a good example.
- Be a teacher *and* a learner: pass on to others the benefit of your experience – online or offline – and be happy to accept advice too.

Find more comprehensive, easy-to-follow advice at www.getsafeonline.org

#digitalresponsibility

Get Safe Online

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For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. If you are in Scotland, contact Police Scotland on 101.

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