Digital Parenting

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Abstract— **We have witnessed a massive use of technology in our homes. As millions of children use the Internet, their parents are concerned about what they do and why. Understanding what children do online is critical for their wellbeing and for the welfare of the family in the digital age. This paper provides a brief introduction on digital parenting.**

Keywords—Digital parenting, technoparenting, cyberparenting, parenting online

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology is pervasive and is effecting how family conduct themselves. There is an increase in Internet access at homes. Today's generation of youths, called digital natives, have never experienced the world without technology. They are more knowledgeable and understanding of digital technology than their parents. They are digital natives, who often use different types of digital media concurrently. Also, many digital devices are portable and mobile, making it difficult for the parents to monitor their children. A major challenge for parents is to adapt mediation strategies that take into account the multitasking capability of their children [1].

Digital parenting means using digital technology as a parenting tool. It involves mediation of children's use of digital and mobile media. It deals with how parents appropriate Internet and smartphones in relation to their household's moral economy. It assumes the digital competences of both children and parents. Digital parents delight in equipping their children with the latest tech devices. It is the parent's responsibility to regulate their children's involvement in digital and mobile technology. They can use software to monitor or restrict their children's online activities [2].

II. TECHNOLOGY

Technology has dramatically changed our homes and social lives. The platforms we have at our disposal include computer, Internet, television, and cell phones. Children use technology a lot to text, chat, play games, Facebook, and YouTube. There are touchscreen interfaces that even little children can use. Parents struggle with setting rules (such as how long can children be online, which sites they can or cannot visit) and boundaries for their children's use of technology. The same can be said of viewing television. People see television as being more entertaining and computers as being educational.

III. PARENT ROLES

Parents play a key role in e-mature child development. They are responsible for keeping their children safe in the modern world, including keeping them safe online.
Children should be aware of privacy and security threats.
Parenting styles depend on social class, gender, and ethnicity. Children use Internet most when their parents are permissive, while they use it least when their parents are authoritarian. Families have different ways of discharging their responsibilities as digital parents. Parents have to face the problematic issues of ethics and privacy. They keep their children from unwisely sharing personal information and prevent their computer from viruses and malware or put themselves at the risk of identity theft. Parents should be aware of hardware and software for content filtering and virus checking and be willing to buy them.
Most parents are strict with their children and they set clear rules and standards. They expect their rules to be obeyed by the children without question. Some parents feel that if let alone their children will play aggressive and violent computer games instead of learning. Wise parents will avoid overrestricting their children. Effective parenting requires a balance between parental authority and children's autonomy [3].

IV. CHALLENGES

Using technology at home has opportunities and challenges. Children may have Internet access at a separate room (such as study room or bedroom) without their parent supervision. Some parents find themselves on the other side of digital divide and will not be able to cope with the digital technology their children are using.

Children find it hard and uncomfortable to discuss their Internet use with their parents and tend to disagree with their parents about Internet risk (see Figure 1) prevention schemes. The digital divide separates the haves or have-nots in society, especially within the family [4].
Tech-related concerns that parents have included the inability to know what children are doing online (especially when using mobile devices) and the frustration in trying to keep up with the rapidly changing tech trends. It is hard for low-income urban parents working two jobs with only cellphone communication to track their children's activities.

One argument against children's use of technology is that it can be psychologically addictive. Risks of excessive early use of technology include obesity, sleep loss, learning problems, low grades, substance abuse, social isolation, personality disorder, depression and behavioral disorders [5]. It seems that children lack e-maturity to manage their risks. Children are being exposed to violence, pornography, cyber-bullying, infringement of copyrighted material, and identity theft [6].

V. CONCLUSION

The parents, school teachers, religious ministers, and government all have roles to play in the technoparenting process. People should not only consider the risks but the opportunities that digital technology brings to the family. An age-appropriate digital literacy education can help children acquire the skills needed for their future career.
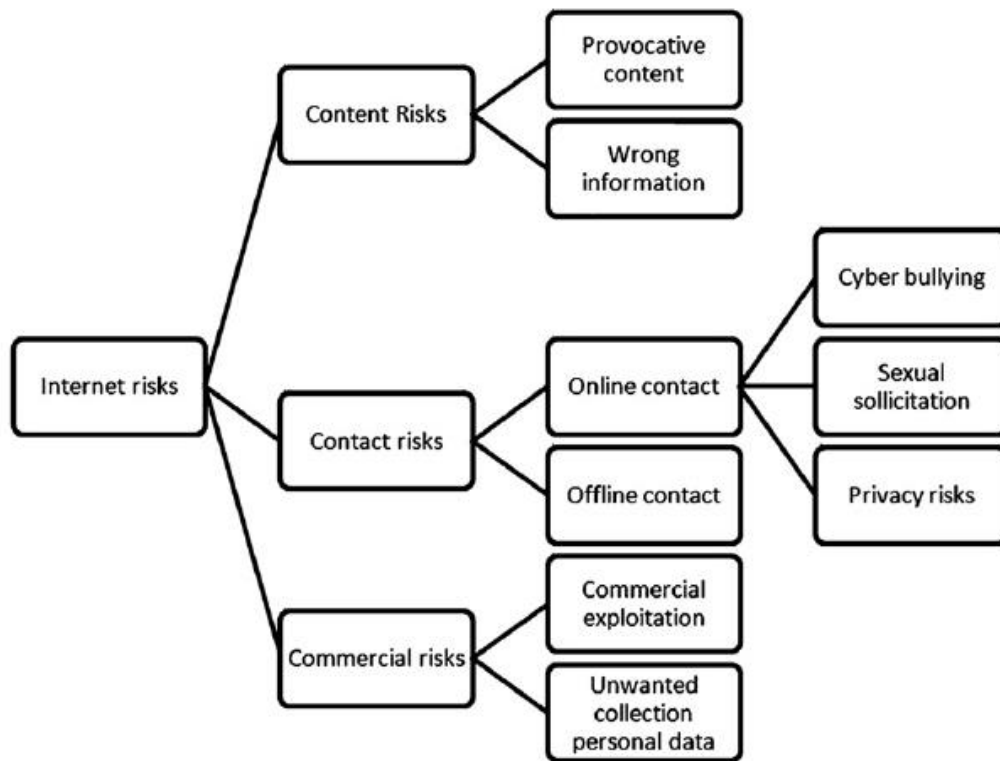

Figure 1 Overview of Internet risks [6].

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