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## Children Online Newsletter

1 message

Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman &lt;dfodeman@brookwood.edu&gt;

Tue, Mar 15, 2011 at 2:45 AM

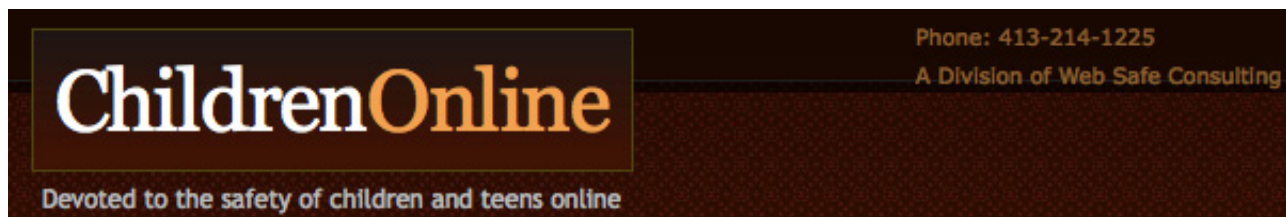
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### Screen Shots

Below are links to screen shots of Gmail account settings, chat and Buzz samples. Personal information has been removed for obvious reasons.

[Gmail Account](#)  
[Buzz Settings](#)  
[Buzz Setup](#)  
[Buzz Profile](#)  
[Buzz discussion 1](#)  
[Buzz discussion 2](#)

Issue: #47

March 2011

### 47th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.

One of the many reasons we value our visits to schools and conversations with thousands of students each year is because we learn so much from them! For example, we often learn what's popular, what are their greatest concerns or fears online, and what websites they are exploring.



This year we've noticed a trend amongst younger students. Google's Buzz is becoming very popular. Yet most parents aren't aware that their children are using it or how public Buzz conversations are. Buzz is the topic of this month's newsletter.

One additional note... ChildrenOnline.org is now accepting workshop dates for the 2011-2012 academic year. If you are interested in having us conduct student, parent or faculty workshops, please contact us via email or our phone (413-214-1225). Here is an [article about our recent visit to the Hotchkiss School](#) to conduct workshops.

As always we welcome your comments and suggestions.

**Related Resources:**

Coincidentally, the good folks at [WindowsSecrets.com](http://WindowsSecrets.com) just released their March 3rd newsletter with an article that addresses the risks associated with lack of privacy online. It is worth reading and reviewing their "ten tips for protecting personal information."

[Windows Secrets personal security baseline](#) By Jan Bultmann

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[Marian Merritt, a Norton Internet Safety Advocate](#) with Symantec Corporation, recently made three good suggestions for better protection of Facebook accounts. They are:

1. Register multiple email addresses on your Facebook account and select a security question and answer that only you will know. A helpful Facebook tool to do this and rate your security level is located [here](#).
2. On your Facebook account, go to "Account" (top right hand corner) and click the down arrow until more options appear. Click on "Account Settings." Near the bottom of the page is "Account Security." Click on "change." Select "Secure Browsing (https) by clicking on the box. Then select both email and text message alerts for any new logins. Click "Save." [Our note: This will protect users from sidejacks which were made possible by the release of [Firesheep in](#)

Best wishes,  
Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at [marjem@childrenonline.org](mailto:marjem@childrenonline.org) or [dougf@childrenonline.org](mailto:dougf@childrenonline.org) for information about our programs or consulting services.

**What's the Buzz About Buzz?**

This year we have been hearing about the growing popularity of Google Buzz accounts amongst fourth through sixth graders at many schools across the country. "Buzz" is an online social networking site (similar to Facebook and MySpace) that is automatically provided to anyone with a Google Gmail account. Gmail accounts are free and it takes just a minute to open an account. Gmail is an outstanding service, valued by many. However, most parents don't realize that if they choose to allow their child a Gmail account, they are also providing instant messaging, chat and a social network account with it. Google also provides instant messaging and chat services to all their Gmail users.

Like any social network, Gmail users have the ability to carry on threaded discussions with other users. The service makes it easy to create a public profile, invite other Gmail users to follow and participate in conversations. Many children use Gmail for their email accounts, and by extension, Buzz.

One of the most worrisome problems associated with the use of Buzz is that the discussions on Buzz are completely public and searchable using Google. Typically, all that is needed to locate a user is the user's Gmail account name. Unfortunately, as is often the case with children using social networking sites, the discussions that a few children have are vulgar, denigrating and create a very negative impression about them. Due to children's lack of understanding about privacy, they often post too much personal information. An example of this is provided [here](#).

[October, 2010.](#)]

3. Any evidence of hacked accounts should be reported to Facebook immediately by filling out the form found [here](#).

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**iPhone Config Utility:**

Though not related to this month's topic, we have recently learned about a new app for the iPhone and iPod Touch that gives parents some controls over their children's use of the iPhone and iPod Touch. And it is free!

iPhone Config Utility allows users to authorize the installation of applications on an iPhone/Touch and other features. It is not the most "user friendly" app but don't let that stop you. It can be set up via [Windows](#) or [Mac](#) (OS 10.6) computers. Though designed for businesses, several features are valuable to parents who's children have these devices. See a [screenshot](#).

This young Buzz user listed herself as ten years old and provided a list of the schools she attended, her church, and the names of her siblings, as well as friends' names. (We have wiped some of the information for obvious reasons.)

If a child has a Gmail account we recommend that parents log into their account and explore their use of Buzz and Chat. Ask your child for the account name and password. You may also want to Google their name (or nickname) to see what can be viewed in a typical search. Visit [Google.com](#) and enter the words "google profile CHILDS NAME" (without the quotes). Sometimes finding them can take a bit of time and creativity to think of how they might be naming themselves. It may be easier to find their Gmail account by simply opening the web browser on their computer and looking through their history or by looking for their friends' names.

While it is possible to disable Buzz and Chat from a Gmail account, the user of that account can re-enable it. Also, it is important to understand that it is possible to use Buzz from today's smartphones so a user can hide their activity on their computer by signing up for a new account and using it from a mobile device such as an iPad, iPod Touch, or Smartphone. Also, note that the default setting of the chat feature of a Gmail account is to save chats so they can be searched later.

We have provided links to several screen shots (see sidebar) so parents can see what/where a buzz account is in Gmail and where the disable button can be found. Clicking "disable" brings the user to all the settings tabs for all Gmail account features. These settings are worth exploring.

As we have written about in other newsletters, we do not recommend that children have social

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INTERNET SAFETY  
CURRICULUM

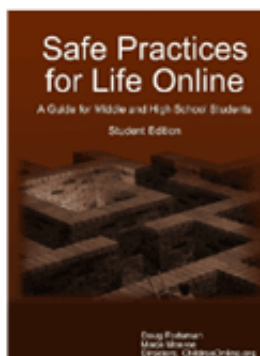
Safe  
Practices  
for Life  
Online



Children Online has a curriculum on Internet



Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting

facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page at ChildrenOnline.org](#) or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)  
[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

networking accounts until age sixteen. We have written several newsletters for parents on this topic if you would like further information, including this special [article on the topic](#). Keep in mind that before age sixteen, most children and young teens are not developmentally ready for the decision-making issues that arise in social networking sites. And Google Buzz is a social networking site that demands attention and careful screening from parents.

### About Children Online

**Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.**

**Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at [ChildrenOnline.org](#).**

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