



Understand your child's digital world

AmanTECH Digital Parents -
an easy guide on parenting
in the digital world.

The future is exciting.

Ready?

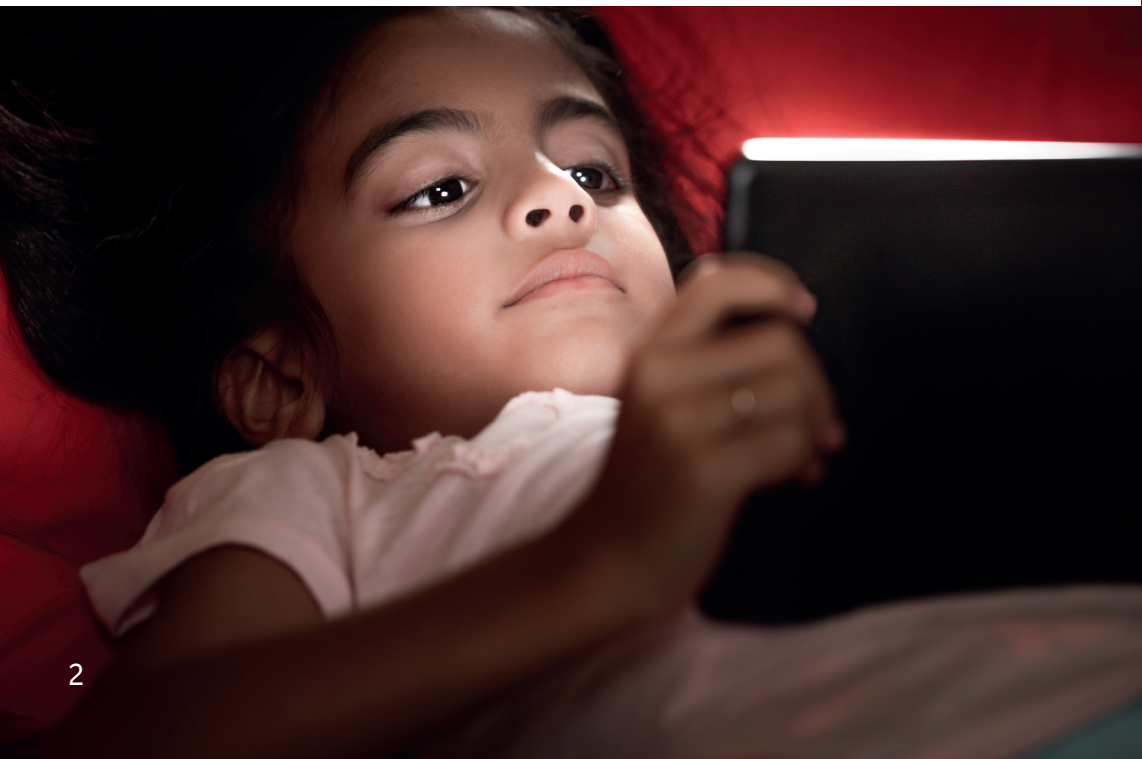


What does it mean to be a Digital Parent?

In this digital age, the internet, mobile phones and other new technologies are enhancing daily life for many families. Used well, the digital world can help children to learn and grow; encouraging creativity and self-expression, creating new ways to socialise, and opening up a world of possibilities for their future.

The digital world, however, is not without its pitfalls and potential dangers; that's where Vodafone AmanTECH comes in.

Our aim is to help parents to navigate this world of social networks, smartphones, music streaming and video sharing – to become Digital Parents. By learning about the places and activities your children enjoy online, you will be better able to guide and protect them in the digital world.



Getting started: A 60 second checklist for Digital Parents

Think about how you guide your family in the real world and do the same in the digital world – don't be afraid to set boundaries and rules for your child from a young age

Have a go at some of the things your son or daughter enjoys – play on the Wii together or ask them to help set you up on Facebook if you're not already a member

Talk to your wider family and friends about how they help their children to manage their digital world – you might pick up some interesting tips

Work together with everyone involved in caring for and supervising your child – other family members, nannies, and even the driver

Make the most of tools like Parental Controls, privacy settings and other safety options

Try not to use technology as a babysitter too often – we all do it sometimes but it's important to know what your child is doing online

Make digital issues part of everyday conversations – don't shy away from difficult subjects like responsible online behaviour, bullying and inappropriate content.

A digital parents' guide to internet technology





Your child's digital world

You may not know that, in Qatar:

85% of our children aged 9-18 years are using the internet
Over half of them are using their own mobile devices

With these facts in mind, it is very important that today's Digital Parents understand as much as possible about where our children are going and what they are doing in the digital world.



Social networking

Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook – for many children in Qatar these are part of their everyday lives



Music

Services like Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud give users instant access to music from around the world



Movies

Whether it's through a paid service like Netflix or a free site like YouTube, streaming movies and videos is likely to be a big part of your child's digital world



Games

From hours playing FIFA 15 on the PlayStation 4, to a quick five minutes of Candy Crush Saga, the digital world is packed with games for all ages



App

In a world of smartphones, apps for every use under the sun are available at the touch of a screen; book readers, search engines, social networks, 3D maps, and many more



Education

The digital world can be a great source of facts, figures, educational games and other resources for hard-working children and young people

Social networking

A Digital Parents' guide to socialising in the digital world

Every journey has a starting point, and for Digital Parents who want to understand their children's digital world it makes sense to start with social networking.

The world's biggest social network, **Facebook**, has over 1 billion individual users and a huge number of different features. On the other hand, some social networks are more specialised:



Instagram is used for photo and video sharing



WhatsApp is ideal for group messaging and voice calls



Twitter sends short messages to an almost unlimited audience



SnapChat lets users send photos and videos that can only be viewed once before being automatically deleted

Each social network has settings which allow members to decide how much of the information they share can be seen by other users.

Sharing media safely...

Smartphones have put high-quality cameras into the pockets of millions of young people, and it is the ability to share photos and videos over the internet which has made social networking so popular in Qatar and around the world.

As Digital Parents, it is vital that we play our part in helping our children to use this opportunity safely.

Here is our Vodafone AmanTECH media-sharing checklist for Digital Parents:



Do...

- Ask about the different social networking sites and apps your children are using, and the types of images and videos they are sharing online
- Share your wisdom and experience; our digital children may be miles ahead when it comes to technology, but they are still learning about the way the rest of the world works
- Find out together about the privacy settings which can limit who is able to view the media they share
- Discuss the importance of managing their reputation; what goes online, stays online!
- Set up your own account so that you can find out first hand what it means to socialise in the digital world



Don't...

- Assume the worst; many young people already have a good understanding of the importance of internet safety
- Allow discussions about sharing media online to become arguments; it is important to be able to talk openly and honestly, starting at an early age
- Presume that parental controls and privacy settings are perfect; it is impossible to completely prevent images being shared more widely than originally intended

Some of these privacy settings are described on page 20. You can also find out more by visiting the Vodafone AmanTECH website.

Music, movies and games

A Digital Parents' guide to the world of online entertainment

The digital world is packed with recreational opportunities which enable our children to listen, watch and play online wherever and whenever they like!



Music

Forget the radio and CDs; the digital world allows listeners to access a world of music using their smartphone, tablet or laptop.



Movies, TV shows and videos

High-speed internet access makes it possible to watch movies and TV shows, or share home-made videos. This might be through a paid service like Netflix, or via free sites like YouTube and Vimeo.



The power of play...

The digital world enables children to play games online, and even to interact with other users while doing so.

For example, players can:

- Compete with or against other users
- Exchanging simple text messages
- Talk to fellow players using a headset and microphone

Digital entertainment – the downsides

The world of online entertainment is, unfortunately, not immune to the problems found elsewhere on the internet.

For example, it is possible that the videos available online might show violence, illegal activities or explicit images. Games could allow and even encourage children to share personal information with other users.

Practical actions for Digital Parents

It is important to be aware of the potential dangers. However, it is also good to understand that there are some simple but effective actions that every Digital Parent can take:



Talk with your child about the things they are watching or listening to online



Agree that if your child is going to access digital entertainment, you will be checking regularly to make sure that it is suitable



Consider subscribing to a paid music or movie streaming service so that your family can watch and listen in a safe and secure way



Find out about the parental controls and safe-search options on devices and web browsers



Check the age ratings of movies and games to make sure that they are appropriate for your children

How to help your kids...

Like it or not, the fact is that children often know more about the digital world than their parents do.

That does not mean that adults have nothing to offer. Throughout their lives, Digital Parents have gained insight and understanding which can help their families to:



... understand internet safety

Today's children may lead the way in terms of technological know-how, but parents have the wisdom and experience to guide their families safely in the digital world



... protect their reputation

The digital world has huge potential for good; however, it also has the potential to harm the reputation of children and their families. Parents have a huge role to play in teaching young people about the importance of protecting their reputation and their future



... deal with cyberbullying

The internet has opened up a potential new channel for bullies to hurt those around them. Digital Parents need to be ready and able to support their children when things get tough



... keep a positive self-image

Children and young people are being bombarded by opinions and images telling them how they should look and act. Parents have a huge role to play in guarding their children from this pressure; helping them to have a positive view of themselves, whatever the digital world has to say



How to help your kids to...

...understand internet safety

For children in the 21st century, the digital world and the 'real world' are the same thing; their lives move from one to the other and back without stopping.

As Digital Parents, it is important to teach them to be safe and secure in both worlds. While tools like parental controls and privacy settings can be useful, nothing beats traditional parenting skills:



Listening

Children need to be able to discuss the things they do and see online, especially anything that may have upset or disturbed them



Explaining the rules

Boundaries are important; it is also important that children understand why they are in place. Taking the time to explain why you have set time limits for technology or blocked certain websites will help your children learn and make good decisions for themselves in the future



Setting a good example

If you have rules like no phones at the dinner table, try to stick to them yourself. If you want the kids to get off their PlayStation or Xbox and go outside, why not organise a family day out instead?

...protect their reputation in a digital world

Speak to any teenager and it very quickly becomes obvious that what other people think of them really matters. They care about their reputation and how the world sees them. This is true in the digital world, just as it is in the 'real' world.

As parents, we always want what is best for our families. We understand the significance of honour; our experience tells us that our reputation and that of our children has huge implications and that it is important to protect them.

Online reputation - the AmanTECH checklist for Digital Parents

Here are four simple examples of things that will help your child to manage and protect their online reputation:



Encourage them to think carefully about what they share online, and to understand that it will be around for a long time



Use privacy settings to control online information; suggest that they decide, before clicking post or send, who they want to see what they are sharing



Remind them that how they act, online and offline, can affect their present and future reputation; it is not uncommon for universities and employers to search for applicants' names online to find out more about them



Challenge them to think about whether or not they would share their information in a different way. For example, would they put a photo on a wall in school for anyone to see? Would they stand up and tell everybody in the room what they are thinking? If not, maybe they shouldn't do it online either

How to help your kids to...

...deal with cyberbullying

The arrival of social networking has provided some great new ways for young people to interact with one another. Unfortunately, it can also give bullies another opportunity to make people's lives miserable, if they choose to.

Examples of cyberbullying are:

- Sending nasty or threatening messages
- Posting abusive comments on a site such as Instagram or Facebook
- Nuisance or abusive phone calls
- Sharing or 'tagging' images or videos of your child without their permission
- Bullying during interactive gaming

If your child suddenly stops using their smartphone, is unusually withdrawn or gets secretive about their internet use, it may be a sign that they are being bullied online.

Four top tips for Digital Parents:



Discuss cyberbullying as soon as your kids are old enough to use the internet



Encourage them to come to you if anyone ever does something to upset them online



Reassure them that telling you what's happened won't make things worse



Use built in tools on smartphones and social networks to block bullies and prevent malicious comments as much as possible

...keep a positive self-image in a digital world

As well as cyberbullying, there are many other pressures which Digital Parents need to know about. Our children are being bombarded like never before with commercials, movies, music videos and images that tell them how they 'should' think, look and act.

This type of pressure is having an effect. For example, did you know that:

- In a survey of young people in the UAE, 78% of females and 58% of males are not completely happy with the way their bodies look.
- Nearly 20% of young Qatari men have felt peer-pressure and taken part in dangerous stunt driving in front of an encouraging audience.
- The increased use of the internet may be linked to a rise in the number of teenagers and young adults suffering from depression.

How can Digital Parents support their children?

As well as loving and encouraging them, there are other ways that Digital Parents can support their children and help them to keep a positive self-image:



Listen to your child's opinions and concerns about themselves; how they look, what their friends think of them, what kind of person they feel they 'ought' to be



Don't assume that all online interactions with other young people are necessarily harmful; social networking is also a good way for friends to encourage each other when something difficult is happening



Encourage them to come to you if they want to talk about anything they've come across online that's troubling them

To find out more about cyberbullying, poor self-image or other challenges which your children may be facing in the digital world, visit www.vodafone.qa/AmanTECH

Safety tips and tools

First steps in the journey

To get started on the road to digital safety for our families, it is vital to build a strong foundation. The basis needs to be communication and trust.



Take time to sit with your child and find out what they are looking at and doing online



Give the reasons behind your rules and limits; be prepared to re-evaluate them as your children grow in age and maturity



Explain the dangers of sharing pictures and personal details online



Talk with your teenagers about the pros and cons of social networking sites and apps

Taking action to keep your family safe online

As Digital Parents, we all want to do something practical to guide our children safely through the digital world. There is an introduction to parental controls and privacy settings overleaf, but let's begin with some more general tips and ideas.



Choose an appropriate homepage on your family computer, like an educational website or Google's 'Safe Search Kids'



Set rules, such as time-limits or keeping tablets and laptops out of bedrooms; that way you can keep an eye on what your children are looking at online



Balance offline activities and online time; visiting family, organising days out and creative activities are ideal



Share your internet safety rules with your wider family and any other adults who might look after your children



Parental controls and privacy settings

Whether it's smartphones, social networks, video sharing or gaming, there are plenty of tools that children and Digital Parents can use to stay safe online.

The controls fall into three general categories:

Parental controls

Using the settings on their children's smartphones, tablets and laptops, Digital Parents can:

- Control 'location settings' which could tell other users where the phone is or when and where a photograph was taken.
- Prevent access to video-calling services like Facetime or Skype.
- Set up profiles for different users which are appropriate for their age and maturity.
- Prevent children and young people from spending money online to purchase apps, music or games without permission.
- Restrict access to social networks and control whether and how photos and videos can be shared.

Privacy settings

The main social-networking providers offer lots of tools and resources to help younger users have a safer and more private online experience.

For example:



Facebook's privacy settings let users control who sees their posts and timeline.



Instagram users can set their photo and video posts to private



Snapchat has privacy settings to control who can send your child 'Snaps' and who can view theirs



Twitter users can protect their tweets so they are only visible to the followers they have approved.

Safety features

Another tool for Digital Parents to use are the safety features built into many web browsers and search engines. These can be used to block certain websites, or to prevent children from searching for inappropriate or harmful content. Video-sharing sites like YouTube and movie-streaming services like Netflix also have safety features that set limits on the type of content that children can view.

A word of warning...

It is important to remember that parental controls and privacy settings are not perfect; they need to be combined with supervision, sensible limits and working with children to guide them safely in the digital world.

A parents' guide to digital jargon



App

A piece of software designed for smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices, which allows users to play games, read, use social network sites, watch video and more



Browser

A programme or app which enables users to access the web (e.g. Chrome, Firefox, Safari)



Cyberbullying

Using social networking, email or text messaging to deliberately threaten or humiliate someone



Geo-tagging

Where information, such as time and location, is added to photos or online messages via a GPS-enabled device such as a smartphone



Grooming

The process of an adult befriending a child online with the intent of harming or abusing them



In-app purchase

Additional content and features available for purchase once you're using an app



Instant Messaging

The process of sending short real-time messages over the internet



Parental controls

Tools that help parents to protect their children online and on other devices (e.g. by controlling which websites they can visit or from whom they can receive email)



Privacy settings / controls

Tools provided by some internet and social networking providers to help you maintain your privacy online



Search engine

A tool that allows users to search millions of websites for information



Social networking

Enables users to connect with other people over the internet and exchange messages, photos, videos and more



Streaming

A way of delivering data such as music or video over the internet to a computer, tablet or smartphone



Website

A page or group of pages on the internet which can be accessed on a computer, tablet or smartphone using a web browser



Wifi

Broadband without wires which uses radio waves to connect an enabled device to the internet

For more information about anything in this guide, visit the Vodafone AmanTECH website, www.vodafone.qa/AmanTECH

On the website, you can also:

- Read detailed articles about everything from technology in the classroom to digital grandparents in the Vodafone Digital Parenting magazine.
- Find digital safety resources and links to useful websites
- Get the latest Vodafone AmanTECH news, including exciting events and activities coming soon to Qatar. **www.vodafone.qa/AmanTECH**

