



For Immediate Release

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Taking away technology doesn't keep us safe – NZ teens

New research reveals nearly half of all NZ teenagers believe confiscating their devices or removing access to the internet is an unhelpful safety measure.

Netsafe's study of 14 to 17 year olds found teenagers believed taking away their access to technology was unhelpful as it would affect their learning, limit their freedom and affect their right to privacy. Teens also said it would be easy for them to find other ways to access the technology.

Netsafe's CEO Martin Cocker agreed that banning or removing technology was not always the most effective way to keep young people safe. "While it's important that parents provide guidance on what young people are doing online, our experience shows that confiscating devices doesn't always have the effect that parents hope it will."

"We've found that many young people will find another way to access banned technology behind their parent's backs. If something goes wrong when they are accessing something they're not supposed to they are less likely to turn to their parents for help. In some cases this can make things a lot worse in the long run."

Instead of an outright ban, young people believed setting age restrictions on certain sites would be more effective in keeping them safe online.

The study found that 79% of the young people surveyed believe the internet offers a lot of positive opportunities for teenagers. It also showed that the top three reasons young people go online are for entertainment, to connect with their friends and for learning.

"Instead of banning technology, we encourage parents to make a safety plan with their children. Key topics to discuss should include what they'd do if something went wrong online, where they can turn for help and ways to keep themselves safe."

The research showed that Maori teenagers are less confident about their digital competencies while teenagers with a disability reported having lower levels of knowledge about online safety.

Netsafe provides free and confidential advice and support for anyone experiencing online abuse or harm. Netsafe's helpline is open seven days a week from 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm weekends and public holidays. Call 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) or email help@netsafe.org.nz.

For help with making an online safety plan with your child visit www.netsafe.org.nz/make-a-plan.

The full report is available at <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/youth-factsheet-2018>

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About Netsafe

Netsafe is New Zealand's independent, non-profit online safety organisation. Netsafe provides online safety education, advice and support for people in New Zealand. Taking a technology-positive approach to the opportunities and challenges digital tech presents, Netsafe works to help people in New Zealand make the most of technology by providing practical tools, support and advice for managing online challenges.

Netsafe's helpline is open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm weekends and public holidays.

Netsafe was appointed as the approved agency to receive, assess and investigate complaints of harm caused by digital communications under the Harmful Digital Communications Act in 2015. The free service is available to all New Zealand internet users experiencing online harassment, offering help and advice to resolve complaints.

[Netsafe.org.nz](https://www.netsafe.org.nz) - 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) - help@netsafe.org.nz