

Title of the project

**“JENNY’S STORY” – AN INTERNET SAFETY RESOURCE
DEVELOPED TO COMBAT CHILD ABUSE ON THE INTERNET**

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SUMMARY

JENNY'S STORY - AN INTERNET SAFETY RESOURCE **DEVELOPED TO COMBAT CHILD ABUSE ON THE INTERNET**

Lancashire Constabulary dealt with several incidents of child abuse on the Internet. These investigations revealed an alarming trend of multiple victims on every occasion who had not previously reported their abuse to anyone.

Academic research revealed that despite high levels of awareness of Internet safety messages amongst young people, their behaviour had not changed and they continued to put themselves at risk.

Scanning:-

- Approximately 1 in 3 children in the UK have access to the Internet at home.
- 6 million UK homes have Internet access, rising to 9 million by the end of 2005.
- 80% of high school children have access to mobile phones, which increasingly have Internet access.
- Extent of the problem of Internet abuse is unknown.
- No UK Home Office statistics recorded on this issue.
- No UK central data collection agency.

Analysis:-

There was no multi-agency preventative strategy. There was also significant under-reporting and research found that young people wanted true/real life stories.

Response:-

Develop an educational resource 'Jenny's story', a hard-hitting film based on a true/real life case study to challenge risk-taking behaviour of young people and achieve a flexible and sustainable long-term problem resolution.

Assessment:-

A pre-launch evaluation involving 2000 pupils and 19 teachers revealed:-

- 80% of pupils believed watching "Jenny's story" increased their awareness of the risk of trusting someone they do not know on the Internet.
- 99% of pupils would not meet up with someone they met on the Internet after watching the film.
- Increase from 14% to 95% of young people who would tell another prior to meeting someone they met on-line.
- Decrease from 18% to 3% of pupils who would share personal details with people they had not met face to face.
- Increase from 32% to 60% of young people who now recognise the importance of saving on-line conversations.
- 100% of teachers would recommend the resource to their colleagues.

As a result of its success "Jenny's story" was made available to all high schools in Lancashire free of charge and teachers are delivering it to pupils across a variety of schools disciplines.

Significant interest across the country has led to an expansive roll out programme to replicate the principles of "Jenny's story" to allow other young people to receive these key preventative strategies keeping them safe on-line.



GOLDSTEIN AWARD 2005



Childnet
International



COMBATTING CHILD ABUSE

ON THE INTERNET

IN LANCASHIRE

USING A PROBLEM

SOLVING APPROACH



Developed by:

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And

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Childnet International

Description of the project

"Jenny's Story" is an educational resource jointly developed by Lancashire Constabulary and children's charity Childnet International. As well as a Teachers' Guide it consists of a high quality, professional, informative and hard-hitting film based on the true story of Jenny, a young teenager, who chats to a stranger on-line using Instant Messenger. The film shows how through on-line chatting, Jenny reveals personal information, which results in her being contacted in real life, and ultimately sexually assaulted.

The educational resource aims to challenge young people about the dangers of chatting to strangers on the Internet. It also seeks to help them reflect on important issues such as trust, flattery and personal security, as well as how they can develop strategies to avoid being groomed or feeling "trapped". It provides everything teachers need to prepare this as a classroom activity for high school pupils.

Overall objectives of the project

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE ON-LINE

Specific and realistic objectives

- Lancashire Constabulary to initiate a preventative strategy for combating child abuse on the Internet.
- Develop an educational resource for use in high schools.
- Develop awareness material capable of impacting on young people enough to challenge and change their risk taking behaviour on-line.
- Empower and provide young people with exit strategies for difficult on-line encounters.
- Increase the reporting of inappropriate on-line contact.

- Reduce the number of incidents of adults meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Success criteria

- Lancashire Constabulary would make 'Jenny's story' available to every high school in Lancashire.
- The film would be credible for the age group statistically most at risk of Internet related abuse (12-14 year olds).
- The film would change young people's on-line behaviour particularly in relation to giving out personal information to strangers or meeting unknown persons who they had engaged with on the Internet.
- The resource would provide more victims with the confidence and encourage them to report inappropriate on-line contact.
- High school teachers would have the confidence to deliver this resource in the classroom
- The film would equip young people with strategies for avoiding or getting out of difficult situations on-line
- The resource would lower the incidents of perpetrators meeting a child following sexual grooming.

Definition of the problem

'Jenny's story' addresses an area of significant concern to the whole community and especially for young people.

The first ever case of Internet related abuse in the UK to be tried in court was in February 2000, when a 33-year-old man made contact with a 12-year-old girl in a teenage Internet chatroom. This contact led to emails every day over a two-month period and then to regular conversations on a mobile phone, to the point where she actually met him off-line, and she was sexually assaulted.

There have been a number of incidents in the Lancashire area involving children who had been groomed by adults using the Internet. Not least of these cases, was 12-year-old Shevaun Pennington who ran off with a 31-year-old US marine in 2003, who she met in a chatroom. This was followed the same year by a series of cases involving model agency scams of which 'Jenny's story' was one such case. In each case the victims were in the safety of their own homes when the perpetrator first made contact. The perpetrators were able to exploit the anonymity of the medium as well as the intimate nature of one to one communication, to manipulate the children into a relationship of trust before arranging to meet with them, in order to abuse them.

In May 2003, the UK government brought in new legislation to address the problem of Internet grooming and made it a specific offence, Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Childnet had established the need for a case study approach in order to impact older children. Lancashire police had established a need for a preventative strategy in relation to Internet related child abuse. A creative and innovative solution was necessary to address and resolve the problem. The two organisations converged to produce a multi-agency preventative strategy that could be delivered electronically with an Internet safety/educational resource for schools to be delivered by teachers. The initiative presented here is such a case.

Scanning

- Approximately 1 in 3 children in the UK have access to the Internet at home.
- 6 million UK homes have Internet access, rising to 9 million by the end of 2005.
- 80% of high school children have access to mobile phones, which increasingly have Internet access on them.
- Extent of the problem of abuse that has its origin in Internet contact is unknown.
- No UK Home Office statistics recorded nationally.

- No UK central data collection agency.
- Several grooming child abuse on the Internet investigations identified multiple victims who had not reported their abuse to anyone.
- Generation gap identified between IT literate young people and technophobic teachers/parents.

The number of child abuse investigations conducted by Lancashire police revealed that grooming on the Internet was on the increase. It cut across all social, cultural and religious divides, recognising no boundaries and is prevalent across the whole of society. The socially deprived computer literate young person was equally likely to be targeted and as vulnerable as the advantaged youngster with every electronic gadget imaginable. The technically skilled and sophisticated computer proficient perpetrator was travelling enormous distances to meet up with victims, predominantly young girls, who they had groomed on the Internet. There was no stereotypical perpetrator, investigations revealed offenders of previous good character who were considered to be respectable family men, sometimes with young children not much different in age from the ones they were abusing, to the predatory paedophile with a string of previous convictions for sexual deviancy.

The problem is compounded by the fact that young people still failed to accept the risks they were taking when they engaged with people on the Internet who they do not know. Lulled by the false sense of security, anonymity and misguided protection they think is provided by the Internet from the comfort of their own home.

Modern technology is also making it easier for the perpetrator to access and engage with young people. Mobile phones increasingly have Internet access on them and mobiles feature in most if not all of the grooming cases reported in the media.

Analysis

Despite the five year gap between the first Internet grooming offence and 'Jenny's story', academic research revealed that, despite high level of awareness of Internet safety messages, driven by high profile government advertising campaigns, amongst young people in the UK risk-taking behaviours had not changed and therefore young people continued to put themselves at risk.

The awareness of Internet safety issues amongst young people changed rapidly between the year 2000 and 2003. Research from the London School of Economics published last year confirmed that 74% of young people were aware of some kind of Internet safety advice. However this had not translated into a change in their risk taking behaviours on-line. 49% of children said that they would give out their personal details on-line. 31% said that they had received unwanted sexual comments on-line. What this indicated was that whilst awareness was high in the UK, something needed to be done to impact young people to actually change their behaviour. Safety advice could only be effective if young people had a better understanding of why it was important.

It became important to develop a preventative strategy to empower and provide young people with exit strategies for getting out of difficult on-line encounters. Further research revealed:

- No multi-agency preventative strategy.
- Investigations revealed multiple victims.
- Under-reporting due to lack of information, knowledge, guilt, embarrassment or fear.
- 17% of children often or always have sexual offers when on-line.
- Young people wanted real/true life stories to help them understand the dangers.

- A paedophile had over 100 e-mail addresses of females he had engaged with in teen chatrooms.
- Only 7% parents think their children have received sexual comments.
- 1/5 of Britons spend 4 hours a day on the Internet.

The development of a case study led approach to Internet safety education was informed by a number of different pieces of research.

In January 2004 Becta (Britain's lead agency in ICT in schools) commissioned Childnet to assist in evaluating an educational Internet safety resource using a case study in 20 UK schools. This gave Childnet an initial insight into the power of a case study to generate dialogue with young people on these issues.

In June 2004 Childnet ended a period of research with Save the Children Denmark with young people aged 12-16 years old. Childnet conducted focus group research with children, particularly looking at methods of effectively communicating safety messages to young people. The children felt that they knew the rules about keeping safe on the Internet, and they didn't just want to hear them again. They wanted the safety information to be made relevant to them and to be brought to life with the use of case studies - they wanted to be shown, for example, why it is important to keep your personal information secret.

The survey UK Children Go On-line (Livingstone 2004) presents findings from a national, in-home, face-to-face survey of 1,511 young people aged 9-19 and a written questionnaire to 906 of their parents. It was the largest academic study of children's use of the Internet ever to be done in the UK. This research over a two year period showed that the majority of young people are aware of the broad Internet safety messages, yet many of them still give out personal information (46% of daily and weekly users) and want to meet up with those whom they have been in contact with on-line (8% of daily and weekly users).

The report also further confirmed the need for case studies to get through to a target audience who had become immune to the safety messages.

Response to the problem

A picture paints a thousand words and no literary description can attempt to do justice to the visual power of the DVD that accompanies the educational resource that is "Jenny's story". It is impossible to replicate in written form the positive impact and effect that it has on young people when they see it for the first time.

The response was to identify a case study suitable to become an educational tool. "Jenny's story" was developed to empower rather than alarm young people and provide them with the strategies to get out of difficult on-line situations. By using this powerful true story the partners set out to challenge the risk taking behaviour of young people by using a real story told in the victims own words. By making the issue real to young people the aim was to reduce the prospects of an offence of Internet grooming occurring concentrating not only on victim and location work but also being offender focussed by informing young people of the importance of saving on-line conversations. This evidence collection plan is critical if a successful prosecution is to be achieved against the perpetrator.

The project developed in the following stages

- Develop a preventative strategy that changed the on-line behaviour of young people.
- Identify powerful hard-hitting case study from police investigations that young people would relate to in victim's own words.
- Ensure a victim centred approach and obtain informed consent in writing.
- Identify actor and develop a high quality film/educational resource, "Jenny's story".
- Prepare a comprehensive and sophisticated package comprising: Introductory Booklet and Teacher's Guide (accompanying DVD), downloadable lesson plan, questionnaires,

support/cushioning material (including advice on handling disclosures) and information leaflets for pupils, teachers and parents.

- Inform, involve and consult key partners and stakeholders.
- Trial product at local school.
- Pilot resource at 12 high schools across Lancashire.

Assessment

In November 2004, a carefully managed evaluation of the film and associated teaching resources took place in 12 schools in Lancashire over a six-week period. This executive summary presents the key findings from over 2000 pupils and 19 teachers. The pupils are aged between 11 and 16 years (Years 7 -11). This feedback allowed important changes to be made to the film, teachers guide and cushioning material. The pilot sought to evaluate 'Jenny's story' and associated teaching resources using the following criteria:

- A** Is the film and associated resources appropriate for use in high schools?
- B** Would it make a difference to both the awareness and pupil's on-line behaviour by giving them a realistic real life example of the possible consequences of giving out personal information to the wrong person?
- C** Would the teachers see the relevance of this subject to the national curriculum?
- D** Would teachers feel equipped to deliver this material?

KEY FINDINGS:

A) Is the film and associated resource appropriate for use in high school?

Of the 19 teachers who took part and responded to the evaluation, all felt that it was appropriate material for high school pupils. One suggested **"all children need this advice"**. Most teachers felt the appropriate age group for the film was between 11-14 on first arriving at high school. 100% of the teachers said that they would recommend the film to other teachers. Several teachers commented that the film was not long enough. Common adjectives used to describe their initial reactions were:-

'Thought provoking', 'Appealing', 'Contemporary'

Teacher comments included:-

'Some students were visibly upset for a little while, but the knowledge of 11 years in prison seemed to settle them.'

'I thought that the DVD was good I had a very positive experience delivering it to all my classes' 'It's powerful and does stimulate discussion'

'Some students thought that Jenny was very naive until we discussed the reasons why and how it may have happened'

'I felt the lesson went well; the pupils did reflect on their behaviours.'

B) Would it make a difference to the on-line behaviour of the pupils?

The honesty of the evaluation identified itself when despite a huge increase in young people who would tell someone who they intended to meet who they had chatted to on the Internet, the

number who would actually tell their parents remained unchanged at 38% which reflects many parent and sibling relationships the world over.

- Overall, 80% of pupils involved in the pilot believed that watching 'Jenny's story' had increased their awareness of the dangers/risks of trusting someone that they do not know on the Internet.
- 72% of pupils believe that watching 'Jenny's story' has changed their view about introducing an unknown person to a friend on the Internet compared to 17% of pupils that had introduced someone they had met on the Internet to a friend before watching the film.
- The impact on pupils' behaviours and attitudes after viewing this film is significant. This is indicated by the decrease from 18% in the number of pupils who would share personal details with people they have not met face to face, to less than 3% after viewing the film.
- There was also a significant increase in the number of pupils that would tell other people if they agreed to meet with someone that had met on-line, from 14% before watching the film to over 95% subsequent to watching 'Jenny's story'.
- When asked what was the top thing they liked about the film the most common pupil response was that it was an honest account of a real life story.
- After watching 'Jenny's story' there was a marked increase from 32% to 60% of young people who now recognised the importance of saving on-line conversations.

C) Would the teachers see the relevance to the curriculum?

Most teachers felt that the resource has relevance to the Personal, Social, and Health Education curriculum; although a significant number thought it was just as relevant across the disciplines of Information and Communication Technology and Citizenship. When asked if they thought it was an effective way to teach Internet safety, 100% answered yes, adding comments like '**relevant**

to the age groups', 'powerful' and 'real life', and that many discussions had arisen because of it.

D) Whether teachers would feel supported enough to deliver this material?

15 out of 19 teachers felt equipped to deliver this lesson in terms of their knowledge of Internet safety and felt that the support material was vital to explain the background and to be able to answer questions thoroughly. The response forms confirmed the usefulness of the support material with comments such as: **'useful easy to follow'** and **'comprehensive'** and **'good for non-ICT specialists'**. The Q&A sheet was stated by a teacher to be **"vital to explain the background and to be able to answer questions thoroughly. All the classes wanted to know what happened to the victim and her abuser."**

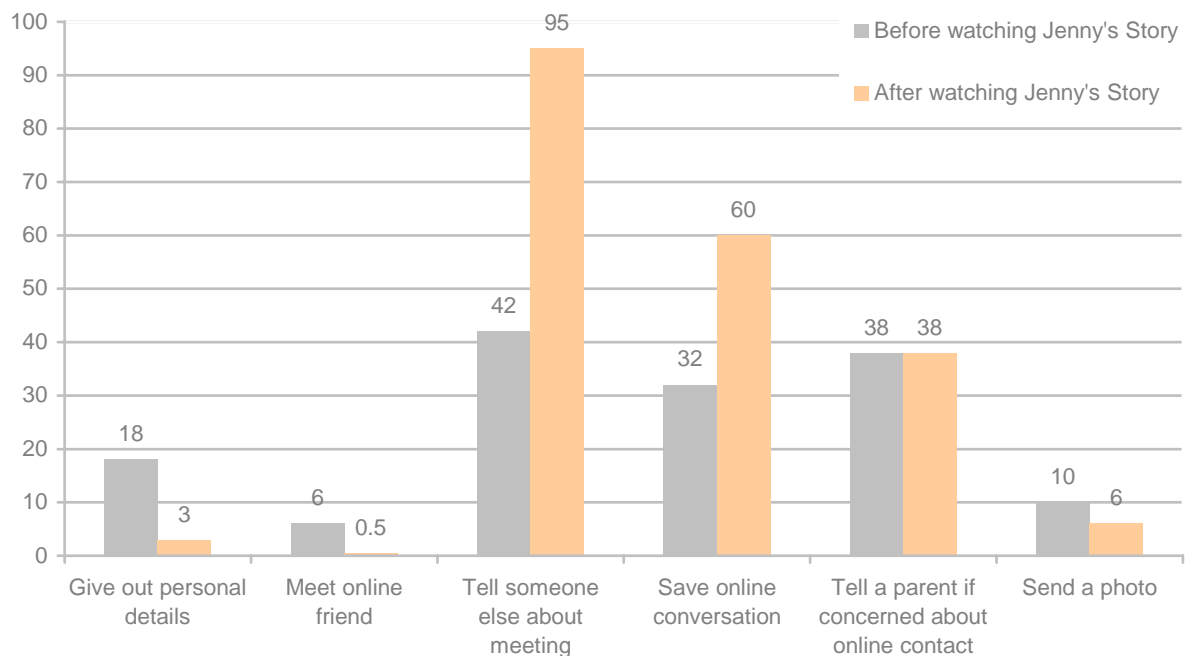


Figure 1: Internet attitudes amongst Key Stage 3/4 pupils before and after watching "Jenny's story" (%)

Independent Evaluation

In developing this resource the partners embarked on an extensive consultation process involving a wide range of experts in the field of child abuse, sex offender behaviour and education before it was released. Once the resource was complete the partnership agreed to an independent evaluation by an expert in the area of child protection, with 36 years clinical and forensic experience working directly with children, which was completed in December 2004. Although we are not able to present the recommendations given by this expert we can say that the conclusions of this report were unreservedly positive and confirmed the integrity of the process, and the due diligence of our approach.

Changes made to materials as a result of the evaluation

As a result of feedback some minor changes were made to the film:-

- A new brighter/softer introduction and conclusion was made with reassurance to the children that Jenny was now OK and that she still used the Internet.
- The questionnaires were changed to make them clearer.
- The leaflets accompanying the DVD were changed to be more student friendly.
- A new section was recorded on the DVD that was specially designed to inform, engage and involve parents.
- A menu option was introduced at the beginning to assist in navigating around different sections of the DVD.
- 'Jenny's story' was separated into chapters to allow users (teachers and students) immediate and easy access to specific sections of the case study.
- A most FAQ section was included to prompt and assist the teachers, to emphasise the learning and re-enforce the key safety messages.
- Additional training was offered for teachers with less confidence around discussing technology.

Problems encountered

Combating Child Abuse on the Internet group raised the issue of repeat victimization, victim anonymity and informed consent and wanted further clarification and reassurance in how these issues had been addressed. Several key members of the group provided a further independent review of the initiative. An independent child protection expert was introduced directly to the victim to address these issues. The outcome from all was extremely favourable and confirmed a victim centred approach.

Continuous assessment model

Since the initial evaluation further assessments have been sought from leading experts in the area of education and child protection:

Bernard Gallagher Msc, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Applied Child Studies who has been involved in child protection research for the last 18 years provided an independent assessment of "Jenny's story". He concluded ***“The initiative had identified a significant policing problem and one which concerns a group - children - that is under represented in terms of policing initiatives and criminological ones more generally. They have carried out a thorough evaluation on the project and found that it has had a considerable impact upon children’s awareness and acceptance that they can be at risk from Internet-based grooming. Moreover children who have taken part in this project state that they have a greater knowledge and preparedness as to how they should respond should they find themselves subject to Internet-initiated grooming”.***

A focus group of education specialists from Derbyshire also independently evaluated "Jenny's story" and found that it was national curriculum compliant and was more than fit for purpose,

they concluded, ***“This is an excellent teaching resource which I recommend without reservation”.***

Work is in progress to perform a six-month review to return to the initial study group of 2000 students to establish how many have still retained the key safety messages.

Critical Success Factors – ‘Jenny's Story’ is an innovative solution for the following reasons:

1. To our knowledge it is the first single case study in the words of the victim to be used as an educational resource in the UK.
2. This resource was developed as a direct response from the target audience, (12-14 year olds statistically the most 'at risk' age group).
3. The technology used in the case, (Instant Messenger) is the most used technology of the target audience and therefore is highly relevant.
4. The implementation is sensitive and age appropriate whilst being sufficiently dramatic to make an impact.
5. The DVD is user friendly using chapter heading which break the story into the different stages of grooming, allowing young people to analyse what they could do at each stage.
6. Resource strikes a fine balance between hitting hard enough to get through to a target audience who have become immune to the safety messages, but not so hard that it scared them. It is particularly good to be able to reassure pupils that the perpetrator was imprisoned for a long period of time and that Jenny is now doing fine.
7. The resource is a complete package for schools with support and training for teachers.
8. Reduces the gap between the tech-literate pupil and the technophobic teachers (professional development of teachers).
9. The support material emphasises the learning points from this case study of which there are many, from issues around personal information to tactics employed by abusers.

10. The case chosen is particularly powerful because unlike other internet safety cases in the media, in this case the perpetrator came to the victim's home, this helps us to emphasise the importance of not giving out personal information (traditionally the most ignored piece of internet safety advice).
11. The use of the victims own words lends authenticity and means that teenagers are more likely to take it seriously.

Conclusion

"Jenny's story" is groundbreaking and far from demonising the Internet promotes positive use of it. This preventative strategy and educational resource is the only one in the UK.

The potential for "Jenny's story" is unlimited; it has proved that a case study led approach is an appropriate and excellent way to get important safety messages across to young people.

"Jenny's story" is extremely flexible as the same ethos of peer talking to peers is transferable to other topics such as bullying, anti-racism, teen pregnancy. There is also interest for it to be used as a training aide.

As a result of the overwhelming success of the pilot "Jenny's story" has now been made available to all 88 high schools in Lancashire free of charge and is being delivered by teachers in a variety of school disciplines.

"Jenny's story" provides a sustainable long-term problem solving approach to a local problem in the community. The scope for the resource is reflected in the interest not only locally but also nationally and even internationally. Several police forces and partner agencies in the area of child protection have already expressed an interest after 'Jenny's story' was presented at the National Child Protection conference and other child protection seminars across the UK. An expansive UK roll out programme is well underway to replicate the principles of "Jenny's story"

to allow other young people across the country to receive these key preventative strategies and keep them safe on-line.

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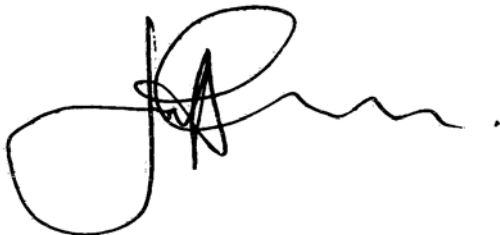
Rob T. Guerette
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Dear Mr Guerette

The Goldstein Award 2005 - (Jenny's Story)

I am delighted to personally endorse and forward the attached entry in respect of the 16th Annual Goldstein Award, 2005.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Julia Hodson', written in a cursive style.

Acting Deputy Chief Constable