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### **IT'S SAFETY FIRST FOR SEARCH ENGINE NETTREKKER GEARED TOWARD YOUNG USERS**

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Joyce Jordan uses netTrekker.com in her Echo Mountain Intermediate School computer classes as a safe way for students to search the Internet. Here is what she had to say about search engines, like netTrekker.com, that are geared toward kids.

#### **The pros**

It's safe. Officials have hand-picked appropriate sites.

Students can save their searches to use again from school or home.

The site has information on current events.

All images, found through image searches, are appropriate. "One student opened up Google to search for Belgium (for a report he was working on), and he found Belgium nudies -- women," Jordan said.

#### **The cons**

It finds fewer relevant sites than search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

"Sometimes kids say they can't find as much information on netTrekker," Jordan said.

#### **What it's used for in schools**

Reports on famous people, research projects and information for PowerPoint presentations.

#### **Comparing search engines**

Search of "bones"

\* Google -- 111 million hits

Top hits include: kidshealth.org, a "bare bones guide to HTML," and Bare Bones software.

\* Yahoo -- 74.7 million hits

Top hits include: Two sites for the TV show Bones, a link to educational sites about the human skeleton, and Bones Skateboard Wheels.

\* netTrekker -- 264 hits

Top hits include: A site about the shape and function of bones, a site about oracle bones used by ancient Chinese rulers for divination, and a "tour" of the human skeleton from the National Health Museum Resource Center.

Search of "United States executive branch"

\* Google -- 68.8 million hits

Top hits include: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), and official U.S. executive branch Web sites.

\* Yahoo -- 13.4 million hits

Top hits include: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), official U.S. executive branch Web sites, and a definition of the term.

\* netTrekker -- 10 hits

Top hits include: [www.govspot.com](http://www.govspot.com) (a non-partisan government information portal), official U.S. executive branch Web sites, and [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

### **Internet safety**

\* Post clear, simple, easy-to-read house rules on or near the monitor.

\* Look into safeguarding programs your service provider might offer, including monitoring or filtering capabilities.

\* Talk to children about what personal information is and why you should never give it to people online. Web sites for children are not permitted to request personal information without a parent's permission.

\* If children use chat or e-mail, talk to them about never meeting in person anyone they "met" online.

\* Talk to children about not responding to offensive or dangerous e-mail, chat, or other communications.

\* Keep the computer in the family room or another open area of your home.

\* Let children show you what they can do online, and visit their favorite sites.

\* Have children use child-friendly search engines when completing homework.

\* Know whom they are exchanging e-mail with and only let them use chat areas when you can supervise.

- \* Be aware of any other computers your child may be using.
- \* Internet accounts should be in a parent's name with parents having the primary screen name, controlling passwords, and using blocking and/or filtering devices.
- \* Children should not complete a profile for a service provider, and children's screen names should be nondescript so as not to identify that the user is a child.
- \* Talk to children about what to do if they see something that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused. Show them how to turn off the monitor and emphasize that it's not their fault if they see something upsetting.

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

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