NEW RESOURCE DECODES SOCIAL NETWORKING

The Minister for Education and Training said a new website focused on cyber-safety and social networking has been launched by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

Verity Firth said the new resource included lessons and instructions on internet safety, understanding privacy and the dangers and pitfalls of over-sharing personal information.

“Social networking is undeniably an important part of a young person’s life,” Ms Firth said.

“You just have to look at the statistics to see how involved young people are with the digital world and we believe it’s important to help them to use these sites safely.”

Latest statistics show:

- 96 percent of Generation Y have joined a social network
- YouTube is the 2nd largest search engine in the world with over 100,000,000 videos
- so far this year there are over 30 million tweets a day
- if Facebook was a country it would be the world’s 4th largest.

Ms Firth said the site had been provided for secondary students to complete during Term 4 and would eventually be expanded to target all students from Kindergarten through to Year 10.

A series of eight lessons cover different challenges and issues. Students learn about the safe and effective use of social networking using scenarios and computer games. It includes a mock-up site called Tracebook where students learn about the site’s complex suite of privacy settings.

Ms Firth said the website would be linked to the NSW curriculum so teachers could use the lessons as teaching materials.

“Another important feature on the site is the cyber-safety help button which provides advice on what to do if experiencing hostile online behaviour.

“The site also links to other quality resources including video case studies, tips and facts which provide excellent stimulus for lessons as well as being useful for discussion with students, teachers and parents.”

To visit the website go to: www.digitalcitizenship.nsw.edu.au. Further information for parents can be found at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click