

Have helpline for cyberbully victims



BY KWAN JIN YAO

THE report, "Move to keep Gen Y-ired safe" (*my paper*, Feb 18), presents positive steps by the Media Development Authority (MDA) to raise awareness on **cyberbullying** and cyberwellness.

However, more can be done to address cyberbullying, like the training of educators, provision of counselling channels, interactive engagement of students, and highlighting the importance of respectful and appropriate Internet and social-media usage.

Cases of cyberbullying are often difficult to **track**, and victims might not be aware of the nature of the malicious actions or how to seek assistance where necessary.

For students on the receiving end of cyberbullying, the relentless barrage of assorted insinuations – which could be immensely personal and hateful – can be psychologically draining, and might cause them to lose focus on school and life.

School efforts to teach the young about cyberwellness should take into account the target audience's age group, use of the Internet and comprehension ability.

Hands-on approaches, with more engaging materials and innovative educational pedagogies, can be used for younger children to capture their attention and interest.

Knowledge can be transferred in a straightforward manner, given their younger age and receptivity.

However, when it comes to those in

older age groups, educators must be careful not to apply **pedantic** methods and feed their students page after page of notes to inculcate the values of cyberwellness.

Instead, older children should be engaged in honest and open dialogue to discuss their personal or collective online boundaries and, gradually, allow them to contemplate how they manage their use of and actions on the Internet.

This would make them cognizant of their responsibilities and self-regulation on the Net. Forcing ideals and expectations on them is unlikely to yield results; students would simply be turned off and lose attention.

MDA could consider working more closely with the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education to complement its current campaign by training teachers on how to inculcate cyberwellness values.

Focus-group discussions would be useful to trainee teachers in understanding the perils of cyberbullying.

It is also imperative to introduce or promote **helplines** and counselling avenues, so that parents and children know where to go when advice is needed.

◆ *The writer is a full-time national serviceman who blogs about current affairs at <http://guanyinmiao.wordpress.com>*

HELPDESK 我的字典

Cyberbullying: 网上欺凌
wǎng shàng qī líng

Track: 追踪 zhuī zōng

Pedantic: 钻牛角尖的
zuān niú jiǎo jiān de

Helplines: 热线服务电话
rè xiǎn fú wù diàn huà

I hope HDB will make better use of such areas, and give young people and other members of the community a convenient place to gather.

If funeral wakes and weddings could also be held at the rooftops of HDB carparks, perhaps the people attending these gatherings would be inclined to park their vehicles at the carparks as well, instead of parking illegally around HDB blocks, as they sometimes do.

MR TROY PARRY

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Bring life to HDB carpark rooftops

I RECENTLY spotted a group of young people riding their skateboards on the rooftop of a Housing Board carpark.

It was a pleasant surprise, because I could not hear the noise they were making from my apartment. The noise is usually quite a nuisance when skaters try to perfect their skateboarding tricks in void decks.

Some people might consider using the rooftop of a carpark for such a purpose to be dangerous, but it is usually a very underused area, with only one or two cars parked there overnight.

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