

a/s/l? Age Sex Location Education Pack

written by Jo Darby, Education Director – Pilot Theatre



This resource pack aims to introduce some of the ideas and approaches central to **a/s/l?** It offers page to stage access to the production in a dynamic and practical way and will hopefully provoke discussion and practical work of your own.

What's in this pack?

This resource pack includes:

- background information on Pilot Theatre
- interviews with the artistic team
- insights into creating a new play
- a discussion of themes and issues
- extra relevant stimulus.
- preparatory and follow up workshops based on the productions themes, style, creative process
- Generation Text – info about the online writing project
- Background information on Internet related issues

Each workshop can be adapted to suit your groups interest and age and covers a range of subject areas, including Drama, PSHE, Media Studies and English.

Keep in touch...

You can keep in touch with Pilot and the production by accessing our regularly updated and interactive web site at www.pilot-theatre.com

Our discussion board allows you to ask questions about any aspect of the production or Pilot's work and get a personal response from the director, designer. Audio, video and still images of the productions rehearsal and performance are available on-line as well as audience and critics reviews.

Why not join our text club by texting 'pilot' to 07887 926101 on your mobile to receive free text updates on all our work

Any suggestions?

We would welcome any comments or suggestions you have concerning our education packs and national education programme. You can e-mail me on jo@pilot-theatre.com

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PILOT EDUCATION

Core Activities

Pilot Theatre Company develop, create and tour pioneering new theatre work for young people. We are a national touring theatre company based in Yorkshire with over twenty years of experience in working with educational and community establishments. We support all our work with a national education programme aimed to encourage active participation and direct contact with professional artists. This work includes workshops, training sessions for teachers, resource packs, play-days and a thriving youth theatre.

National Education Programme

A full education programme supports all our national touring productions and includes practical workshops that take place in secondary schools, colleges, universities, pupil referral units, Special schools and community/youth groups. Pilot support its work by education packs and video and audio clips that can be downloaded for free from our website www.pilot-theatre.com

Training sessions for teachers, post show talks and further chances to contact the company directly are also available. Our work links to the following subject areas and relates to courses in: Drama, Theatre Studies, English, Personal and Social Education, Performing Arts, Dance, Expressive Arts and Media Studies. Pilot Theatre also designs individual projects for education and community groups, often working with disaffected and disadvantaged groups of young people.

Pilot Youth Theatre

We also run Pilot Youth Theatre for 14-25 year olds who want to work with theatre professionals to experiment with a range of dramatic techniques to produce their own work. Sessions run in Wakefield and Castleford (in association with Airedale High School) Performance projects include **Our Town** (The Millennium Dome) **Eclipse** by Simon Armitage (Wakefield Opera House) **Brokenville** by Philip Ridley at (York Theatre Royal Studio and Wakefield Arts Centre) as part of The National Theatre Shell Connections Scheme which we are also participating in during 2004.

www.pilot-theatre.com

Many young people contact us directly through our website, via the discussion board where ideas are exchanged between Pilot artists and young people. The site also has numerous of reviews of our productions that have been written by young people inspired after seeing the show. The site also includes video and audio clips from current and past productions, text and images and a unique timeline that documents the rehearsal process on-line.

THE WORLD OF a/s/l?

....ever surfed the net?

....gone online?

... entered a chat-room and found something or someone you didn't expect?

....ever made contact with a stranger, been asked your a/s/l?

***It's easy to meet people. Too easy, maybe.
I don't know. She was just some random girl.
I can't remember if she found me or it was the
other way round, but she knew what she was doing.***

ever responded back.....as a different person.....and felt a rush when they wrote back?

***So she was only fifteen. How was I to know?
You don't need to know. She said she was sixteen.
She felt like sixteen. It's not my fault if everybody lies and
she wasn't the sort of girl you ignore.***

..ever discovered things you didn't know existed, scared yourself....but gone back for a second look and a third and a fourth ...and felt a thrill!

***She was good, you know? Inventive. Creative.
She had a good imagination and that was what hooked me in.
Some of the things she said...some of the things I'd never even heard of. So she was
weird, but that's what we're all looking for, right? Something a little different.***

ever felt more yourself..... being someone else?

Welcome to Livia's world

.....the world of a/s/l?

.....where nothing is ever as it seems

Pilot brings you a startling new piece of theatre that exposes the Internet phenomena, the freedoms it has provided and the dark side that it proliferates. **asl?** asks 'what is reality?' for Generation Text. In a world where cyber travel is possible at the click of a button and a million lives can be entered through hundreds of chat-rooms, at what point does fantasy become real life?

Livia uses chat-rooms, that's nothing new

Why she uses them and how is another matter.

Take a trip with us through cyber space and find out.....

Contemporary Relevance

Since its official arrival into our lives in 1995 the use of the Internet has become as common as making a phone call or turning on the television.

On the internet, we can do the weekly shop, book a holiday, pay the bills, check our bank account, listen to the radio, watch films and communicate with anyone, anywhere in the world at any time of the day or night.

The Internet has changed the lives of average citizens as much as did the telephone in the early part of the 20th century and television in the 1950s and 1960s.

Researchers and social critics are debating whether the Internet is improving or harming participation in community life and social relationships. Some research has indicated that greater use of the Internet was associated with declines in participants' communication with family members in the household, declines in the size of their social circle, and increases in their depression and loneliness.

Others argue that the Internet leads to a greater number and better social relationships by freeing people from the constraints of geography or isolation brought on by stigma, illness, or schedule. According to them, the Internet allows people to join groups on the basis of common interests rather than convenience

The Internet

What is the Internet?

The Internet is a global network of computers. Any computer connected to the Internet can communicate with any other computer on the Internet. The Internet is neither a single computer nor even a single service. Think of it like a worldwide highway system. You can get from any highway to any other highway, though not necessarily via a direct route. The Internet has rules, called protocols that determine how data gets from one connected computer to another.

Where Did the Internet Come From and Who Owns It?

The Internet evolved out of the Department of Defence's "ARPANET" project that was started in 1969 to link military researchers at four universities. It was designed as a decentralized network so that it couldn't be knocked out by a single nuclear attack. During the 1980s, the Internet was adopted by the National Science Foundation that provided funding to make it available to a wider array of scientists and researchers. Later it was opened up to commercial traffic.

No one owns or even governs the Internet. It's a decentralized network that is supported by the companies and institutions that access it. There is no single governing body however there is a project, called InterNIC, which registers Internet domain (names). Even Internic, however, is in the process of being decentralized.

A New Kind of Web

While PCs were once the primary means of accessing the Internet, we're now seeing Internet-enabled devices such as pagers and mobiles that send and receive email, access the Web and take photographs. Soon, everything from your car to your refrigerator will be connected to the global network, communicating with each other wirelessly.

Electrolux, best known for its vacuum cleaners, has developed the [ScreenFridge](#), an Internet icebox that manages your food, among other things. It e-mails a shopping list to your local supermarket and coordinates a convenient delivery time with your schedule. Say hello to a brave, new world.

Chat-rooms

“Hi are you busy? Wanna chat? a/s/l? Age, sex, location and so it all begins.....”

A Chat-room is the name given to a place or page in a Web site or online service where people can "chat" with each other by typing messages which are displayed almost instantly on the screens of others who are in the "chat room." Chatting is one of the most popular uses of the Internet. Generally the participants remain anonymous, using nicknames or pseudonyms to identify themselves online.

When you're in a chat area, it's easy to forget that you are in a public "place" and that you don't necessarily know the true identity of anyone in the chat room. It's common to "meet" someone in a chat area who gains your confidence by being sympathetic and willing to "listen" to your problems. So when you're out there in cyberspace, watch yourself. You never know when 5'6", blond and female could actually mean 6'3", hairy and male. Don't believe everything you read online!

“ It was a random connection. She was wandering about, lost really, looking for a friend. Luckily she found me. It could have been a lot worse. The world is stuffed full of sick people, Conrad. Predatory older men for instance out to lure young girls. Aren't you glad it was me that found Carla and not one of them?” Jenny a/s/l?

Themes

- Parental responsibility v personal responsibility
- Fantasy and Reality – where does one world end and another begin?
- Alter Egos and Identity Fraud
- Internet Safety
- Freedom and Escape
- Storytelling – the worlds we construct beyond our everyday existence
- Connections – making relationships

CREATING THE PLAY

Interview with Richard Hurford - author of a/s/l?

On the playwriting process

How and why did you become a playwright?

I've always written since as far back as I can remember as a small child. It was just something I did. When I was a teenager I became more involved in theatre but had no idea about writing for it or even a desire to write for it. At that stage I was just into exploring the medium and enjoying the experience from lots of different perspectives.

Gradually, and more so at uni, I found myself called upon to write stuff because somebody had to and I just carried on in that way afterwards.

It wasn't really until my late 20's that I realised how much of my time was spent writing and that it fitted me. So, quite a long, meandering route to it really, but looking back, it seems clear to me that that was where I was heading even if I didn't know it.

How do you begin to write a play? What do you start with?

I usually start with an image, which may be from any part in the story and may or may not have a story attached to it.

It could be an image or moment or a few lines of dialogue perhaps linked to something I'm interested at that particular time. Ideas pop into my head all that time, which is both great and sometimes a bit of a pain. Sometimes it would be nice to go the pub or even just walk down the road without thinking "Hmm that would make a good scene/character/opening line" or whatever. On the other hand, thank God it does happen like that or I'd be staring at a blank screen even more than I do now.

What is your writing process?

I spend the first fortnight lying on the sofa, walking around, drinking coffee, eating pens, grabbing books off the shelf for research and just thinking about it – letting my mind wander through images, lines, characters and moments that crop up, often not knowing how they will link together.

Then I force myself on to the computer and just write it. I can't plan things out in minute detail. Instead I try to join the dots of these thoughts to create a first draft. No matter how crap it is I can't start working properly until I've got a first draft to work with and rip to pieces. Very little of that first draft may stay. We would all like it to be perfect the first time, but it can't be by the very nature of the process.

What is the most exciting part of the process for you?

When you know you've written something that works.
When it just clicks that is a moment of true euphoria.

Would you ever want to direct your own work.?

No. I don't have the distance to direct my own stuff. I swing between the extremes of hating every word and tearing it all to shreds and being stupidly precious about things that everyone else can see don't work.

Is it hard handing it over to someone else then?

Scary sometimes, but not hard. Theatre is a collaborative process. I'm very excited when other people come on board (actors, directors, designers etc). Theatre can't work as one person's effort, so it isn't a problem handing it over 'cos that's part of the process. Sometimes it's hard when people don't get what you're trying to do or say, but with a good team you can work through it. There's no point in writing for the theatre if you're not prepared to let other people bring on their ideas and contribute to the development of the script.

What, for you, is the essence of a good script?

Theatricality. By which I mean that it's really written for and uses the medium.

What advice would you give any young person thinking of writing a script or becoming a playwright?

Probably the most important thing for any writer is to understand the medium you're writing for and this can only come from experiencing it. So for theatre writing, I'd recommend that you see as many plays as possible, read as many scripts as possible and ideally involve yourself practically in as many aspects of the theatre process as possible. By doing this, you'll absorb how the medium works and what you can - or can't - do on stage.

Plays are only begun sitting alone at the computer or chewing the end of a pen, so in order to develop as a playwright, you have to go through the experience of working on your play with actors, directors and designers in rehearsal, seeing it in performance and learning through your mistakes and successes. It's obviously not easy finding a way to have your play produced, especially when you're starting out, but school and college productions, your local youth theatre, local amateur dramatics companies are all possible ways of getting your work up on its feet. The results may be wonderful or awful, but you will learn from it and develop as a writer.

The practical process of writing a play is different for every writer and everyone finds their own way through. Ultimately, I suppose you need to keep faith with yourself, your vision and your inspiration and write the sort of play you would like to see. Often easier said than done, but it's the only way.

Who would you list as your literary influences?

It's hard to pinpoint which artists and pieces have had an influence on my work and how I see the world. Things imbed themselves in your consciousness often for no apparent reason and it may be years later that you see quite how much of an impact they had and why. Probably the most honest response to this question is to give you a random list of names of people whose work has variously moved me, impressed me, made me think, made me feel, made a difference to me - and then realise I've forgotten someone that changed my life! But here goes.

As far as theatre goes, living playwrights that excite me always or sometimes include Howard Barker, Bryony Lavery, David Mamet, David Hare, Caryl Churchill and Tony Kushner and I love Forced Entertainment's work. Dead writers would be Jean Genet, Joe Orton, Strindberg, Alfred Jarry for his Ubu plays, the Jacobean tragedians like Webster and Ford, Christopher Marlowe and Euripides. Film directors I admire for their vision and guts include David Lynch, Pedro Almodavar, Derek Jarman, Peter Greenaway, Mike Leigh and Gus Van Sant. A tiny selection of novelists dead and alive would be Angela Carter, Isabel Allende, Ian McEwan, Iain Banks, Zola, Dostoyevsky, the seriously weird Ronald Firbank and Antoine de Saint-Exupery for The Little Prince. A television list needs Dennis Potter, Tony Marchant and I think 'Six Feet Under' is amazing.

A pretty wide ranging list - and lots left out. I suppose if I had to pick two names out of them all as possible influences on my work and specifically **a/s/l?** it would be Genet and David Lynch, but more for their vision of the world than any technical or thematic aspects. As far as **a/s/l?** goes, I would have to say that a important influence would be the tens of thousands of unknown Internet journal, fanzine, slash and website writers and the people who construct whole new worlds populated by casts of thousands in chat rooms every day.

How would you describe your writing style?

Again hard to pin down and I'm not particularly sure I can or want to. Writers don't have all the answers about their work by a long way; ask any actor who's been in a rehearsal room with a writer. If pushed I suppose I could say it's very theatrical and heightened. At least that's the way it plays in my head and that's my aim. I'm not interested in realism on stage, partly because I think there's no such thing anyway, and every play has to develop its own logic, which may be a million miles away from the way real life operates.

On writing a/s/l?

What did you take as inspiration for a/s/l?

The initial spark was a conversation I had with some students they talked about chat-rooms and how long they spent there and how they played with identities and being different people.

The role-play aspect seemed very theatrical to me.

People constructing new characters to play, creating people out of aspects of themselves, writing dialogue, developing whole life scenarios. In a way it struck me that every day, millions of little plays are being written in chat-rooms and via personal messages.

What is a/s/l about for you?

That's always a difficult question to ask a writer, especially before the play has been worked on and performed. However, I think the play operates on a number of levels. The story is essentially about the difficulty of gauging how much and how soon we should tell our children about the true nature of the world. Should we terrify them or lie to them to them? But it also deals with the constant question of how we handle fantasy and reality and that's where the Internet setting comes in. The play doesn't explore this head on, but I think that we're haven't even begun to understand how computer technology is going to change the way we operate as human beings. In a way it allows us to go much further with our existing capacity to fantasize and play different roles in our lives. Part of **a/s/l?** looks at what might happen if these possibilities were taken to extremes. It's not an issue play. It isn't meant to provide any answers. It's an artistic response to a whole range of influences and questions that I've come across.

a/s/l? is quite a graphic play – do think this is necessary to make the point?

I don't think the play is particularly graphic. The story includes sex and violence, but there's no sex or nudity or violence as such on stage and the play's purpose is not to shock for shock's sake, although that can in some cases be a perfectly valid artistic objective.

It's a play which deals with some of the darker aspects of life, so necessarily it's going to include some dark material. Some people may find the subject matter difficult, but there's nothing in the script, which doesn't appear on the front pages of the papers and in the media - including the Internet - every day.

As for the language, that's just the way these characters, and many people, speak. I find this quite a hard question to answer in that I don't think any subject matter should be taboo for discussion and exploration and I dislike the impulse we have to apologise for dealing with disturbing facts of life. **a/s/l?** is just what it is. Like it, dislike it, think it's good, think it's bad, but don't ask me to justify it or apologise for its existence.

What has been the most difficult aspect of writing a/s/l?

The exploration of where fantasy and reality begin and end and theatricalising that.

How will you resolve this?

The design, staging and rehearsal process will be incredibly crucial to resolving this and I've flagged up some ideas I'd like to explore during this time.

What's your favourite bit of a/s/l?

At the moment, it's the character of Squibb, because he's the one who's most surprised me when I've been writing the piece.

What do you want the audience to go home thinking about?

Perhaps "Who am I?". Perhaps about the importance of honest communication, whatever that may be. Perhaps about whether it is really possible to communicate honestly with any other human being and what that means for us? But really, it's not a message play in any way, so what they take from it is up to them. I'm not a politician, or a policeman or a teacher. I'm just a person and this is what I've seen when I've looked at my subject matter. Some people will connect with it, some people won't.

GENERATION TEXT

Pilot Theatre offer you and your students the chance to take part in a unique cyber theatre project called **GENERATION TEXT**

“ **He told me he looked like Justin Timberlake. Lying little!**” Livia, *a/s/l?*

At the end of *a/s/l?* what happens next?

YOU DECIDE!

Join **Pilot Theatre**, well known playwrights, actors, directors, and students across the country as we create the first new play written online.

Taking the last line from *a/s/?* as a starting point you, your students and young people from all over the country can take part in creating a brand new piece of theatre. Professionals, including the director of *a/s/l*, Marcus Romer and playwright, Richard Hurford will be online throughout the process to add to the script as it develops and offer creative support and advice.

To take part go online at www.pilot-theatre.com and click on Generation Text.

In the Generation Text Chat-room you can explore your ideas for characters, locations and plotlines and experience how new work is created from first lines to live performance. You can write some script at anytime and anywhere there is an Internet connection – at school, in your bedroom, in the library, so log on and get writing!

WORKSHOPS

Workshop1 CAUGHT IN THE WEB INTERNET WORKSHOP

a/s/l? graphically presents some of the dangers of going on line. The following workshop ideas offer a practical introduction to exploring these issues with your students.

As a designer creates a website by putting together web pages, before adding special features, so a director pieces together scenes before adding theatrical effects such as lighting and sound.

Aims:

to offer students the chance to experience the process of creating theatre as a process.
to encourage students to consider their target audience and the benefits of re-working ideas to achieve exactly what they are seeking to portray.

use: the safety guidelines (web wise) and examples of chat (extra stimulus) as stimulus. It may be useful for students to have a copy of the guidelines whilst doing this workshop and for their personal future reference.

A good way to start this session would be with a general discussion about the students own Internet use.

do this practically:

Form a line representing between say 5 and 20 hours a week.

Ask students to stand at one end or the other depending on how frequently they go on line. In groups ask them to make two second frozen pictures showing why they go online. Make this fast and fun.

Talk about the results:

whether the internet is a good resource.

are there any negative aspects?

what can we do to protect ourselves from the dangers?

you may wish to refer to the guidelines in the web wise section (pgs 36-41)

Make a website about Internet safety

Begin by asking the students what they think makes a good website these ideas could be written down to use as a reference throughout.

These may include: music, sound, pop-ups, video clips, interactive chat rooms, flashing icons.

Ask if anyone has used a website where a character leads you round the pages, or where video scenes are played out.

If you have Internet access you could look at Theresa's tale (see Useful Web links, pg) as an eg: of a character in a web page.

Split into groups giving each a guideline about Internet use. (guidelines in we wise section on pgs 36-41)

Using improvisation ask each to make an animated web page based around their Internet guideline.

Each groups' web page should highlight their Internet danger and offer a possible safety precaution.

The written words on the web page should be replaced by speaking.

Remind each group to think about who the target audience is:

very young children, teenagers, parents?

Ask them to think about features they could incorporate.

Many of these will be similar to those considered when creating a devised piece expressing an issue or theme.

eg: music/ sounds, interactive moments, physical images, movement styles, pace.

Show the web pages individually and decide as a group what order they would appear in on a website.

Now try running them together to create a whole web site.

Encourage the students to think of this process in a theatrical way, similar to piecing together the scene of a production.

Discussion

was this successful?

what problems were encountered?

The discussion may raise the following points

Continuity?

Try having one person as the online surfer navigating their way round the website.

Can they take the role of a narrator figure and interact, ask questions to take them from one page to another.

Too many things happening at once?

Try identifying which images or actions conveyed the message most effectively.

Refine some of the elements.

Does this make a difference?

Discuss

the process, its difficulties, solutions and successes.

Ask the students to think about how they could apply these skills to their own devised pieces.

What does this workshop highlight about the role of a director?

End with a re-clarification of potential Internet dangers.

Workshop 2 IDENTITIES AND ALTER EGOS WORKSHOPS

“I’m busy, places to see, people to be!” Livia a/s/l?

a/s/l? taps into the human desire to be someone else – the escapist feeling of creating an entirely new identity – a new you who can be whoever you’ve always wanted to be.

Aims:

to introduce the idea of identity and what makes us who we are. They offer a starting point for creating characters for theatre in addition to considering the ways in which we can successfully convey this to an audience.

There are 3 sections to this workshop

1. Create an Alter Ego

‘Squibb. Hardly a person at all. More an alternative term for a popular pastime. As in “ Good evening and welcome to Pervert News. Last night George Michael was arrested for having a squibb in a Los Angeles toilet’ Livia a/s/l?

Log on the Internet, go into a chat-room and you will find an array of spoof famous people logged on, many clones of Posh Spice and Superman, chatters hiding their real self, behind an alter ego of someone they would rather be, or a life they would rather be living.

Mickeymouse, Poshspice66, Barbie xxx, James007.

This is a fun game to get students thinking about the many different types of characteristics that create an identity.

Ask each student to sit on a chair, making two rows that are back to back.

Imagine that you are in a chat room, not as yourself but as a famous alter ego. Maybe David Beckham, Tony Blair, Avril Lavine. Take it in turns to ask each other personal questions about your identity and character.

These may include:

Age, Sex , Location?

Occupation?

Married?

Are you famous?

Are you tall, fat, short, spotty.....etc

Each student must reply to the questions as the alter ego they have adopted . Ask them to guess which alter ego they think they are speaking to.

After say a minute get everyone to move one chair to their right, adopt a different alter ego and chat with another mystery person.

Variation: You could provide a lucky dip of alter egos from which students pick from before they move round each time, making sure they are characters you think most of the group will be familiar with. (See Extra Stimulus pg for ideas)

Discuss:

When you described yourself to the other person what characteristics did you refer to?

Were they mostly about appearance?

What does that say about how we judge people?

“He told me he looked like Justin Timberlake – lying little bastard!”

Livia – a/s/l?

2. Who is it – starting to create a character.

Aims:

a series of exercises to provide different starting points for creating a character. They can be used in isolation or together for a more extended workshop.

Develops:

students awareness of how, as an audience, we project stories onto the people we see before us
awareness of the importance of body language when creating a character

i) A visual approach

Ask a volunteer (A) to stand in front of the group, motionless and staring at a fixed point ahead.

Ask the group – **Who could this be?** Ask them to say the first things that come into their heads and keep asking, and who else and who else and why?

Experiment with different individuals taking turns to stand in front of the group.

Now ask another volunteer (B) to stand a few paces behind that person.

How does introducing B affect how we view A.

Do the characteristics we see in A alter at all?

Try having B place a hand on A's shoulder – does this make a difference?

Expand:

The associations we have with certain objects or items of clothing also add to our identity and who we are, or the identity we project to the world.

This exercise can be continued by adding a piece of costume or an object, for example a hat or a mug or an umbrella.

Discuss:

How do these additions change our perceptions of the character or characters and their relationship to each other?

What happens if either A or B say one word or one sentence.

What difference does the addition of voice make to the character portrayal?

ii) A vocal approach

Give two students a Chatter Profile (see Extra Stimulus Pg)

Ask to think about whether their profile is true or made up.

Once they have decided this ask them to read out loud a piece of the chat text.

Depending on whether they think the profile is real or fantasy the style of voice and what they choose to say will be true to the character of their Chat-room profile or completely different

Eg: **Barbie4U**

A: 18

S: F

L: Starbucks

Wants to talk about: My rabbit dying

The student may decide this is a false profile and therefore speak in a deep, gruff voice.

Fireman Brian

A: Old!

S: M

L: Newcastle

Wants to talk: Drum and Bass

The student may decide this profile is true and therefore speak in an older sounding Geordie accent.

Ask the rest of the group to close their eyes and listen to the voices.

From what they have heard what sort of a character might A be/ B be? Think about their age, sex, and location.

Discuss why they thought that.

Think about:

- the style of the voice, the volume they spoke at
- the pace and the way in which they replied to the other chatter.

Now get A and B to reveal their Chat-room Profiles to the rest of the group.

Are they surprised by the identities.

What does this say about how much we rely on appearances?

iii) A physical approach.

Students in pairs are labelled A and B.

All the A's walk round the room at their own pace in their normal walking manner. B's follow behind and copy them exactly.

Encourage students to be really accurate looking at the whole body, not just the legs and the pace.

Ask A's to exaggerate their walk, at first just a little and then more and more. B's continue to copy.

Now ask A's to sit down and observe B's .

Call out the names of B's one at a time and ask A's what sort of character they think they are watching.

How might that character be feeling?

where are they going? where have they come from?

What was it about the walk that made you think that.

Reverse the process beginning with B's walking round the room and A's copying

This is a good exercise in encouraging students to create their character not just with their face but also using the rest of their body below the neck. It will also remind them that a character is created not through speech alone.

3.Identity and Object Association

The script of **a/s/I?** contains particular references to objects, both as scenery setting and badges of identity.

Objects in our life can be an integral part of who we are and the image we wish to project to the rest of the world. They can be our touchstones – without them we may feel like we have lost a limb or are naked, they can trigger powerful memories, and may mark a turning point or incident in our lives.

In pairs ask students to identify one object, accessory or striking feature, eg: dyed hair that is an important part of their identity.

Discuss:

why is this?

what does it convey about themselves?

does the rest of the group agree or is there something that is more representative?

i) The Umbrella Game – one person's umbrella is another's walking stick.

Aim:

A good warm up for spurring the imagination into action.

Choose an object to be passed round the circle, eg: umbrella, shoe, bottle etc. Ask each student to describe it as different object and convince us that's what it is through an action or a few words without actually stating its identity.

eg: an umbrella may be a gun, a golf club, a mop, an oversized toothbrush, a trumpet.

ii) Object and Incident/ Object and Memory –

Aims: to offer a way into thinking about a character's world and the elements that make up their life, starting with a particular incident or memory.

Students can either use a character that has grown out of a previous exercise or a chat room profile as the starting point for this.

Split into small groups and give each group an object.

They can either use this object for what it really is or give it an alternative, interpretative identity (see above)

Ask each group to create a scene where that object either triggers a memory for the character or represents an incident in their life.

Think about who the character is and why this object is an integral part of their identity and life.

Discuss :

each scene and the presentation of the character.

Do the object and person complement each other or are they completely incompatible.

Does this create drama/humour/ intrigue.

Are you left wanting to know more about this person and their life?

Workshop 3 FANTASY AND REALITY WORKSHOPS

“ they don’t care what they look like, cos no-one can see them ,so they don’t bother dressing up like the fish at the top, but the thing is the angels and rainbows are just wearing disguises. When they swim down to the sea bed and they think no-one can see them, they’re ugly too”

Jenny a/s/l?

This workshop is in 2 parts

1.

Exercise - Fact into Fiction

These first 2 exercises allow students the chance to experience how easy it is for reality to be distorted into fantasy and fact into fiction.

Develops :

group and team skills

Stand in a circle.

Ask one person to start with a fact about themselves:

eg: “ I’m allergic to fish”.

Each student takes it in turns to add to this fact, distorting the truth of it a little bit more each time.

eg: If I eat them my skin falls off.

By the time this fact has reached the last person it should be unrecognisable as complete fantastical nonsense.

eg: If I eat fish a sea monster comes and pulls me into the sea never to be seen again.

Discuss how it felt doing this. Out of control, liberating, fun?

Variation: try creating a physical identity this way.

Use a fact about a student as a starting point. eg: I have blonde hair. Progress round the circle as before, exaggerating a little more each time. Eg: I have blue skin. Ask the last student to name this imaginary character.

Discuss

How did the person who started the chain with a fact about themselves feel to be distorted and turned into a fantasy figure?

Was it funny or alarming at how easy it was for someone else to play with an element of your identity.

Did you like the fantasy figure or not?

Exercise - Whose story is it?

Workshop split into small groups.

Get each member of the group tell a story about themselves as a small child.

eg: learning to ride, first day at school etc .

Keep them short as they need to be remembered.

One member of the group keeps their own story, whilst everyone else learns someone else’s.

They must be able to re-tell this new story convincingly as if it had actually happened to them.

Ask a member of another group to listen to each of the stories and try and guess who was telling their own original story.

Aim :

For the group to be so convincing in their storytelling that it is impossible to spot who is lying and which person is telling the truth.

If they guessed correctly – how could they tell?

Body language, tone of voice, eye contact.?

Discuss

How does this relate to people you meet in chat-rooms?

Can you ever trust anyone online?. How does that make you feel.?

Continue: Look at the Internet safety workshops that encourage students to think about safety measures against the dangers of the Internet.

2 Creating the World

“Jenny, fourteen, female on a beach. On a beach holiday with her loving family. Mum, 33, female, obviously sitting on a beach towel, eating ice cream. Dad, 37, male, allegedly, kneeling on the sand, his arm around Livia, 3, covered in ice cream and sand. A happy family snap shot.

This was taken a few days later. Jenny, again 14, female, extensive bruising to the face and body, right arm broken, left thighbone snapped, spine shattered, skull crushed, bloating to the body a from immersion in sea water. You wouldn't think it was the same girl.” Livia a/s/l?

Develops:

Creative skills for generating devised material

Awareness of isolating scenes or removing them from their world or context.

For students who are only presenting a short scene from a play or creating a devised piece it can often be helpful to think about what happened before and what might happen afterwards. Around each character or incident exists a whole world.

Remembering this and exploring it adds depth to character understanding and presentation.

The more you understand your world and character, the more the audience will enter that world and life with you.

Stimulus: photos of family holidays (your own or those in Extra Stimulus).

i. Every picture tells a story.

Split into groups and give each a photo.

Discuss in groups:

who the people in the photo might be, where they are and why?

what is the appearance they are projecting.?

1) Ask each student to choose a character to play.

As a group re-create the frozen photo image.

Now discuss how you think each character might really be feeling behind the photo image they are projecting.

2) Each character take it in turns to break the photo freeze to say how they are really feeling at that precise moment in time when the photo was taken.

They might be feeling exactly as the photo suggests or not.

3) Ask each group to present their frozen photo.

As they freeze ask the rest of the group what they think the atmosphere or impression of this photo is.

4) Now ask each character in the photo to speak and reveal their true feelings whatever they may be.

eg: I'm having a great holiday

I've got sand in my pants and its really itchy

I'm sick of having to look after the dog all the time

I'm going to fall over if he doesn't take it soon

ii. - Before and After

Ask each group to create a scene of:

what they think was happening or had happened just before the photo was taken.

what happened afterwards.

Eg:

Before – they were building a sand castle

Photo is taken

After – the tide came in and swept it away

NB: This only needs to be short. If it helps tell the students each character can only speak once or twice.

Ask them to run the two scenes together, punctuating them in the middle with the frozen photo.

Show work back.

Remind the rest the audience of the original frozen photo

Ask them what they think might have happened before and after.

Then ask the group to perform what they had decided.

Are the shown scenes what everyone watching expected?

Discuss

Are the shown scenes what everyone watching expected?

What does this tell us about appearances?

How much do we rely on the appearance of someone to make a judgement about them or what they are doing?

Can appearances always be trusted?

How might this affect your decisions whilst using the Internet.

Workshop 4 MY OTHER LIFE WORKSHOPS

“The hardest part about **a/s/l?** has been the exploration of where fantasy and reality begin and end and theatricalising that.”

Richard Hurford – author a/s/l?

a/s/l? flicks between worlds, from cyber space to real life and back again passing through characters imaginations and psychoses on route. In order to theatrically succeed the audience must be carried along this journey in a way that is true to the script and theatrically entertaining. The director and designer translate these shifts in time and place present in the script onto the stage through a collaboration between the acting, the set and technical affects including, lighting, sound and projection.

Workshop Aim:

to encourage students to think about the different ways of presenting major shifts in time and place if technical theatre resources are not available to them

To explore the reason and use of technical effects.

A. Real life

As a group choose one character from the photo to work with.

Ask one member of the group to play this character.

The rest of the group will be the people in that characters life.

Think about:

who this person is in real life.

where do they live, do they have a job, are they married , any pets, strange hobbies, weird habits, likes, dislikes etc.

As a group you could do this through hot spotting.

The group asks the person playing the character personal questions about their life and they have to respond spontaneously as that character.

eg: Do you have any sisters?

Do you like your job, why?

What's your favourite food?

Give them a few minutes to establish who this character is.

Ask the students to create a short scene where the character has had a bad day at work. The rest of the group can play the work-mates .

NB: To keep the scenes short you could restrict the students to one or two lines per character.

Show these back to the rest of the group and ask them....

what they think this person is like?

can they suggest any particular details about them

Eg: Do they live alone?

What do they do at the weekends

Any bad/strange habits/hobbies

Do these suggestions match the profile that the group had created for the character?

B) Fantasy

Now think about the characters alter ego.

If they were to go into an Internet chat-room:

who would they be? what's their chat-room profile ?

You can give the students the Chat Profiles (see Extra Stimulus) as examples of alter egos as a starting point.

Set the scene:

Tell the groups that at the end of the bad day at work their character has gone online to escape their everyday reality.

What fantasy world they would like to escape into? eg: dream place or dream job, tea with someone famous, a world of chocolate, clothes shops, plants.

eg: **Mrs Smith**

A: 40

S: F

L: Pontefract

Wants to talk: Tom Jones

Mrs Smith would maybe escape to become a backing singer for Tom Jones on tour, and would never be older than 18.

eg: **Walter McTavish**

A: 30

S: M

L: Liverpool

Wants to talk: To anyone who'll listen

Walter would be Oprah Winfrey, chat show host extraordinaire broadcasting 24 hours a day.

Ask each group to create a scene from the fantasy world that they have decided upon for their character.

Switching between worlds

Richard Hurford talks about "Theatricalising the transition from fantasy to reality and back again"

Discuss:

what this might mean.

how might you show the shifts between the worlds of fantasy and reality on stage.

Firstly think about the theatrical elements that can be used.

Eg: Movement, scene changes, costume changes, sound, lighting, special effects.

How does Pilot use these affects in **a/s/l?**

You might like to refer to the Interviews with Marcus Romer and Laura McEwen

Then ask the students what they might do if there were no technical elements available – just the actors.

What acting/directing techniques can be used to highlight a change in action on the stage.

eg: freeze, sound, movement, change in direction, pace, audience interaction.

Try some of these styles out with one group, the rest observing.

Ask the group to run their scenes together, adding a very definite freeze when the character sits at the computer, just before they enter their fantasy world.

eg: bad day at work scene

Character gets home and sits at computer – FREEZE

Unfreeze – enters fantasy world.

Ask those watching whether they felt the freeze marked a definite change in the action for them.

Try a different technique.

eg: the rest of the group create a movement to physically take the character into the fantasy world

Or: they might make a sound or rhythm.

Either: Ask each group to try out some of these ideas with their piece and decide on one technique.

Or: Allocate each group a specific technique that they have to work with .

Show these back

Discuss:

which techniques were most successful and why.

would some techniques have suited other groups pieces more than others - why?

Workshop 5 STATUS / MANIPULATION AND MOVEMENT WORKSHOP

The status of the characters in *a/s/l* is extremely varied and often changes. Each character acts differently depending on who they are with or what they want. There are subtle status struggles as each character makes their journey through the manipulation, persuasion and blackmail present throughout the play.

Part A: will begin a discussion about status and then offer exercises that introduce the students to this in a practical way.

Part B: will challenge the students to use some of these skills with a piece of the text.

Aim: to allow students to experience and understand the plays presentation of status for themselves.

A. Starting Status

Discuss:

What is status?

How do we show this?

eg: body language, tone of voice, clothing, material objects.

Who do you think had the

highest status in *a/s/l*?

the lowest status

most changing status

Ask them why?

'S'- Monsters

This is a really fun game

Aim :

to make students aware of physical status and how status works in a group situation.

Ask everyone to stand in a line facing you.

Make a moving S shape using your whole body.

Do this by:

raising your hands above your head so you are as long as possible

bending your body in a continuous movement making a shape of an S through the air.

make sure you bend right down to the ground and then stretch out again right up to the top.

Ask everyone to do this at once at their own pace.

When you shout 'stop' everyone must freeze at whatever point they have reached in their S shape. Some people will be crouched down on the ground, others will be stretched up tall.

Ask all the tall S's to make one group and all the small S's to make another. The shape they are in now is the type of S monster they are

Tell everyone they are now all S monsters who hiss to communicate.

They must now move about the room as the monsters communicating within their groups and with each other.

Repeat the process so that everyone has a turn at being a tall S monster and a short S monster and can experience how it feels to have a different status within the group.

Discuss what happened:

How did you feel moving round the space.?

Which S monsters did you communicate most with – why?

Who do you think had the highest status in the space

Why?

How was this demonstrated?

Who had the lowest status in the space
Why?
Was this difficult to deal with?

Is this a common scenario in real life?
Can you think of any examples eg: Offices, playgrounds,

2 Chairs 3 People

With this exercise each person has to assert their status using speech and body language.

Develops: personal skills including confidence and tenacity

Place two chairs in the centre of the room.

Choose three students for the exercise and tell them they all want to sit on the chairs. They can't just push and shove each other out of the way but must verbally reason why their need to sit down is more important than the others.

Eg: I need to sit down 'cos I really need the loo
I shall sit down – NOW – don't you know who I am
I think I'm about to have my baby – move etc

Obviously as there are only two chairs one person will always be standing and trying to assert his or her status to gain a seat.

If the persuasion and assertion of status is very convincing then the seat must be relinquished and that person must now try to win a chair back

Discuss:

Which characters were most successful in gaining the chair.

Was it always those who were very loud and aggressive or was persuasion achieved through other means?

What role did body language, physical movement play and eye contact play?

Think about verbal persistency, flattery, and exaggerations.

B. Work with the text

Use the pieces of script in Extra Stimulus for this exercise.

Depending on the ability of your group and the amount of time you have you may wish to just look at the short Text 1 below or the longer, Texts 2-4.

Jenny

You're fourteen, I'm fourteen. I like to talk. So do you. But best of all we both hate our parents.

Carla

I don't hate my parents.

Jenny

It's ok. You can tell me. No secrets here.

Carla

But I don't.

Jenny

Everybody hates their parents. You just don't know it yet

Give each group a piece of text.
Remind them that the two characters are communicating through a computer.

Ask them to work on the scene thinking about:
the status of the characters
how they can convey this to the audience.
They should try to use some of the ideas from the previous two exercises.

eg: Body language, eye contact, tone of voice, style of speech, movement around the space.

Ask them to discuss the character's status first.
If they are working on texts 2-4 whether there are status changes during the piece.

Variation :If the students are using text 2-4 they may wish to introduce a chair or two into the scene.
How this is used may alter the portrayal of the scene.
Think about positioning and when characters choose to be seated.

Show back:

Discuss:
What methods of communicating status worked best and why.
What affect did introducing a chair have on the portrayal of status
How were changes in status conveyed
How did we feel as an audience watching.

EXTRA STIMULUS

A. CHAT TEXTS

Sample 1

A: I was thinking maybe we should meet up somewhere.

B: Why?

A: I don't know. I just thought it would be good.

B: For who?

A: For me , for you.

B: Since when did you know what was good for me?

A: I thought maybe we could meet up for a drink somewhere. Or go for a walk or see a film maybe.

B: OK

A: Really?

Sample 2

A: Hello? U busy? I need to talk

B: I'm not talking today

A: Please. What's up

B: Nothing. Nothing's up. Nothing's down. Nothing's anywhere. Ok?

A: K

Sample 3

A: Maybe we should talk about Brian

B: I don't want to talk about that

A: Why not? Lets have a nice little chat about you and the fireman.

B: I said I don't want to

A: Brian

B: Listen I'm just trying to

A: Brian

B: If you'd just stop

A: BRIAN! *Pause* it could be our little secret, maybe ..perhaps ...if

B. CHAT PROFILES

1. **Barbie4U**
A: 18
S: F
L: Starbucks
Wants to talk about: My rabbit dying

2. **Fireman Brian**
A: Old!
S: M
L: Newcastle
Wants to talk: Drum and Bass

3. **Squeaky Tweedie**
A: 20's
S: M
L: Washington D.C
Wants to talk: Presidential Election Campaigns

4. **Tommy Girl**
A: 65
S: F
L: Little Snitching
Wants to Talk: Knitting Patterns

5. **Harry Potty**
A: ?
S: M
L: Hogwarts Housing Estate
Wants to Talk: Gremlins

6. **Mrs Smith**
A: 40
S: F
L: Pontefract
Wants to talk: Tom Jones

7. **Walter McTavish**
A: 30
S: M
L: Liverpool
Wants to talk: To anyone who'll listen

8. **Greenfingers 01**
A: Young
S:
L: Sydney
Wants to talk: To some people who speak English

C. CHAT LINES

We're not a family that talks

That's not the way it works, not in this story.

I'll take care of you

I don't want to do this anymore, I've changed my mind

I'm 23 – older than you – is that a problem.

Most people I meet here are lonely

I'm 14 years old for Jesus sake – its not my responsibility.

We all need to connect with someone

You lied to me

Seeing is believing

I'm just trying to be friendly

I disappoint in the flesh.

Are you ignoring me

If they lied to her, they'll be lying to you.

You can't delete your history.

You'll be back – you can't keep away from me

Script sections

TEXT 1A

Jenny

You're fourteen, I'm fourteen. I like to talk. So do you. But best of all we both hate our parents.

Carla

I don't hate my parents.

Jenny

It's ok. You can tell me. No secrets here.

Carla

But I don't.

Jenny

Everybody hates their parents. You just don't know it yet

TEXT 1B

Jenny

You're fourteen, I'm fourteen. I like to talk. So do you. But best of all we both hate our parents.

Carla

I don't hate my parents.

Jenny

It's ok. You can tell me. No secrets here.

Carla

But I don't.

Jenny

Everybody hates their parents. You just don't know it yet. Tell me about them

Carla

Nothing to tell.

Jenny

We'll see. Start with their names.

Carla

Conrad and Shirley.

Jenny

Age?

Carla

He's forties. She's a bit younger. Thirty-eight. Thirty-nine. I think she lies about it.

Jenny

Jobs?

Carla

Dad's got his own business. Computers, but I don't know what exactly.

Jenny

And Shirley?

Carla

She doesn't work. She's into the church a lot.

Jenny

Good. I'm building up a picture.

Jenny

. So are they hard or easy on you?

Carla

Pretty easy. About most things. It's mostly my dad.

Jenny

Shirley just goes along with whatever he says.

Carla

She's always saying stuff like "Your father just wants to protect you."

Jenny

And what's he want to protect you from?

Carla

Oh well...you know.

Jenny

Penis.

Carla

Mostly.

Jenny

Any one in particular?

Carla

There's Zig, I guess.

Jenny

And he likes you.?

Carla

Think so.

Jenny

But Conrad doesn't like Zig.

Carla

No.

Jenny

Why not?

Carla

Well, he's not in school.

Jenny
Too stupid?

Carla
Too old. He's twenty. My dad went crazy.

Jenny
Ah.

Carla
Said I couldn't see him. Said he'd have him arrested. Said he was a pervert.

Jenny
Is he?

Carla
No. He's not like that.

Jenny
Pity. So why did Conrad call him a pervert?

Carla
Well, you know, cos I'm 'only fourteen' and all that stuff.

Jenny
Conrad's got a dirty mind.

Carla
What?

Jenny
Thinking all that stuff. Shows he's the pervert.

Carla
You think?

Jenny
I know. I bet you were angry with Conrad when he cut you off from Zig.

Carla
Yeah.

Jenny
And I bet Shirley just backed him up. 'Listen to your father.'

Carla
That's right.

Jenny
She should have stuck up for you. Told him to lay off you.

Carla
She wouldn't.

Jenny
So you were angry with her too.

Carla
I was.

Jenny

Very angry with both of them. I bet you even hated them.

Carla

I did.

Jenny

Told you so.

Pause

Carla

But it was only because-

TEXT 2

Jenny

So what you gonna do about Zig?

Carla

Nothing I can do.

Jenny

Maybe.

Carla

What?

Jenny

Maybe I should talk to him.

Carla

Zig?

Jenny

Not Zig. Stupid. Conrad. He talks, doesn't he?

Carla

I guess, but... He doesn't know you. He doesn't come here.

Jenny

I'll make him.

Carla

How?

Jenny

Look, do you want me to fucking do this or not? I don't care. It's your shitty life.

Carla

It feels weird.

Jenny

Fine. Say bye to Zig for me. Cya.

Carla

No.

Jenny

I got things to do.

Carla

Wait.

Jenny pauses.

Jenny

Well?

Carla

Talk to my dad.

Jenny

Sure?

Carla

Sure.

Jenny

Then I will.

Carla

You're a friend, Jenny.

Jenny

I know. Cya.

Jenny exits.

Carla

Cya.

TEXT 3

Jenny

If you want to save your baby, you've got take some action.

Conrad

Meaning what?

Jenny

Lock her up, Conrad and throw away the key.

Conrad

Lock her up?

Jenny

I mean keep her close, Conrad, keep her under surveillance, keep her under your thumb or you'll regret it. When she goes to school, take her there and pick her up. When she goes out, she only goes with you or Shirley, if God can spare her. When she's at home make it a rule, no phone calls unobserved, no letters uncensored, no diaries unread. Watch her every move.

Conrad

She'd never agree to that.

Jenny

What's there to agree with? She doesn't need to know why you're doing it, just that you are and that's an end to her dirty little secrets.

Conrad

I don't know. We said she could sleepover with a friend at the weekend. It's a girl from school. We know the parents. They go to our church.

Jenny

And you're thinking of letting her go?

Conrad

What harm can there be in –

Jenny

Are you mental?

Conrad

What?

Jenny

She's not even trying, but obviously she knows she doesn't have to with you. This is all so basic.

Conrad

It's just five minutes away. The girl's parents will be there.

Jenny

And will they stay awake all night to make sure Zane isn't sliming up through the toilet bowl and oozing into their beds with his dick in his hand.

Conrad

You think it's a scam?

Jenny

And such a transparent one. Your daughter's either very stupid or very clever.

Conrad

Carla's a bright kid.

Jenny

Then she's making a fool out of you.

Conrad

I never thought.

Jenny

Be clear in your mind, that girl will do everything in her power to undermine your control. This is worse than I thought. Make some excuse, say she's ill, say her grandma's got cancer, keep her off school and keep her in the house.

Conrad

I can't keep her a prisoner. She'll hate me.

Jenny

This isn't about your feelings, Conrad. This is about your daughter's security. If you really love her, you shouldn't care if she hates you. You're doing it for her.

Conrad

I don't know.

Jenny

I do. I know what I'm talking about. I know what can happen. When I was fourteen....

Pause

Conrad

What?

Pause

What happened when you were fourteen?

Jenny

Next time, Conrad.

She exits.

Conrad

What?

GET WEB WISE

Netiquette and safety online

“Every tiny dick-brain this side of a coma knows how dangerous these things can be to an innocent child. Little Tommy taps “Peter Rabbit” into his search engine and six months later he’s starring in farmyard flicks in Mexico. It’s a sick world out there and when the child’s me, we’re talking significant peril. If the media ever finds out they’ve left me alone with this again, they’ll have Martin Bashir humping the letterbox. It’s like giving Hannibal Lector a knife and fork or Michael Jackson a Mothercare catalogue or...” Livia a/s/l?

As a means of communication the Internet has become our greatest asset and our biggest danger. It is estimated that around 33% of the UK population are now online and nearly 5 million children are using the Internet. Chat is particularly popular among young users, especially those services provided through the major web portals and on individual websites. It offers the facility for instant and real-time access to people of all ages and backgrounds from across the world, and enables children and adults alike to interact on a level playing field, regardless of many of the social, cultural, religious, geographical or potentially discriminatory obstacles which may inhibit them offline.

However, it is essential to recognise that this facility can also be abused by a criminal minority to make contact with children with a view to establishing and developing a sexual relationship with them in the ‘real world’. Such relationships can then be pursued through other media such as instant messaging, email and mobile telephones. Before going into the dangers, it should however be put into context. Millions of teenagers go online every day, and most are safe. The way to stay safe is to understand the dangers and follow some simple rules.

GENERAL RISKS

Situations and Behaviour That Make You Feel Uncomfortable

Not everything that can go wrong in cyberspace necessarily puts you in physical danger. There are web sites, newsgroups, chat rooms, and other places online that contain material that could make you feel uncomfortable. It could be material that’s sexual and/or violent in nature. It could be material espousing hateful attitudes or discussing activities that you find repulsive or unpleasant. It really doesn’t matter what it is. What does matter is that you have the right – and the tools – to instantly remove yourself from any area where you feel you shouldn’t be.

Putting Yourself in Physical Danger

The most serious risk you can face involves the possibility of someone hurting or exploiting you because of information that you post or someone else posts about you online or because of something you do or somewhere you go as a result of what you encounter online

Giving Up Privacy or Putting Yourself Or Your Family in Financial Risk

The Internet, like so many other places in this world, is home to people who would try to take money from you or your family or just pester you with unwelcome advertising and marketing material. Be especially wary of any “get rich quick” schemes that promise to help earn you lots of money in your spare time. If something sounds “too good to be true,” it probably is.

Harassment

Not everyone in cyberspace minds their manners. When you're online, especially in chat rooms or bulletin boards, there is a chance that you'll get messages that are harassing, demeaning, or just plain mean. Don't take it personally. A message that is demeaning says a lot more about the sender than it does about the person who gets it. Ironically, even people who are nice in the "real" world can forget their manners when they go online. The best thing to do if you encounter messages or people in chat rooms who are acting that way is to **ignore** them. Some messages, however, may constitute harassment, which is a crime. If someone sends you messages or images that are obscene, lewd, filthy, or indecent with the intent to harass, abuse, annoy, or threaten you, **report** it to your Internet service provider **and/or the Police**

Hurting Others and Getting Into Trouble

Avoid anything that might hurt people and risk getting yourself into trouble. You need to respect other people's privacy and avoid taking any actions that annoy, harass, or hurt other people. You are responsible for your behaviour online.

Risks by Area

The Web

Web sites give you the opportunity to read newspapers, tour museums, check out libraries, visit distant lands, play games, look at pictures, shop, or do research to help you with your homework. You can pursue your hobbies, plan vacations, and much more. There are millions of web sites on just about every topic imaginable.

Did You Know? Some web sites are wonderful, others are silly, and some contain "adult" images and other material to avoid. Others are violent, racist, sexist, and demeaning. Some of these sites contain material that can be disturbing, even for adults. If you wander into any of these areas, it's best to leave immediately by clicking on the Home icon, going to another site, or shutting down your browser.

Caution In addition to displaying information, web sites sometimes ask you for information about yourself. The site may ask for your name, mailing address, E-mail address, and other information before it will let you in. It may entice you to provide information in exchange for sending you a promotional item or entering you in a contest. **Never enter any information about yourself without first checking with your parents or guardian .**

When you enter information on a web site or anyplace on the Internet, you're giving up a bit of your privacy. At best, your name will wind up in some database, probably to be used to sell you something now or later. At worst, it could be used to harm or exploit you. Just because a web site seems to be operated by a reputable organization or individual doesn't mean that it necessarily is what it seems to be. Anyone – including creeps and criminals – can set up their own web site. So be extremely cautious before telling the "web master" anything about yourself. This is especially true with sites that contain adult material.

Some teenagers have their own web sites or post material to web sites maintained by their school or an organization. That's terrific, but if you do post something on the web, be sure never to include your home address, telephone number, or a photograph of yourself.

If you do want people to be able to contact you through the web, just give an E-mail address.

Chat Rooms

Chat rooms let you engage in a live conversation with people around the block or around the world. It's like being on a party line, only you type instead of talk. Everyone in the "chat room" can see everything you type. The types of chat rooms vary depending on the service you're using. Some chat rooms are just open conversations. Everyone has a pretty much equal role. Some rooms are moderated where there is a "speaker" who is leading the discussion and participants. Some rooms have chaperones or monitors who are responsible for maintaining order, but even in some of these rooms what you type is displayed immediately. The monitor can kick someone out of the room who is acting in an inappropriate manner, but he or she may be able to act only after the fact. **The monitor can't, however, prevent you from going off to a private chat area with a person who might eventually do you harm or typing information that could put you in danger.**

Did You Know? Chat is probably the most dangerous area on the Internet for a couple of reasons. As with other areas of the Internet, you don't know who is there, so never say anything in a chat room that you wouldn't say in public.

It's not uncommon for people to make "friends" in chat rooms. You enter a room; start a conversation with someone; and, before you know it, you've established a relationship of sorts. That relationship could turn out ok, but there are some not-so-happy stories. Chat-rooms are sometimes used by people to exploit others. To put it bluntly, chat-rooms – especially those used by teenagers – are sometimes also used by paedophiles to find their victims. Adults or even older teens seeking to exploit younger people don't necessarily tell the truth about who they are.

You might meet someone in a room who appears to be sympathetic and understanding and offers you wonderful advice and counsel. If the relationship remains strictly online, that could be OK as long as you're careful not to give out any personal information and you let your parents know.

Caution It can be tempting to get together with someone you meet in a chat room, but remember – **people are not always who they seem to be.** The basic rules for online safety apply to all areas of the Internet, but they are especially important in chat areas. Never give out personal information, and never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you meet in a chat room without first checking with your parents or guardian and taking the precautions listed in "Never Get Together With Someone You 'Meet' Online" on page 40.

Chat-rooms are sometimes organized around topics, so avoid any topic area that makes you feel uncomfortable. But just because a chat room is designed around a particular topic doesn't mean that other topics aren't discussed. Even if the room is "teens only," you have no way of knowing if everyone really is a teenager **-so you still have to be on guard.**

Be especially careful of chat rooms that get into subjects that might be associated with sex or cults or groups that practice potentially dangerous rituals. It might seem interesting or even fun to discuss actions that you might never consider engaging in, but some people who fantasize about things also like to carry them out. Be suspicious of anyone who tries to turn you against your parents, teachers, or friends. They may have a hidden agenda.

On some services and web sites you can enter into a private chat area where you can arrange to meet friends. In some cases, those rooms are truly private. But in other cases they may be listed in a directory of rooms. If so, there is nothing to stop others from entering those rooms. One trick to avoid harassment, especially for women and girls, is to choose a gender-neutral name – like your initials or a word – to use in a chat room. It's fine to be cute or funny with the name you choose, but be sure it doesn't identify you and doesn't have any meaning

or implication that might encourage others to bother you.

E-mail

E-mail is typically a one-to-one communications system. Just like regular mail, you write to someone and they can write back.

Did You Know? Increasingly, people and companies are using E-mail to send out messages to thousands of people at a time, encouraging them to buy something, do something, or visit a web site. The process, known as “spamming,” can be intrusive and annoying. Because E-mail is essentially free, “spammers” can send out thousands or even millions of messages at little or no cost. Some use spamming to try to entice people to visit sexually explicit web sites.

Each E-mail message that you send and receive contains a return address. What many people don’t realize is that the return address can be fake. So, just because you get a message from “grandma@cottage.com” doesn’t mean it’s really from grandma. It could really be from “wolf@bigfangs.com.” E-mail also contains other information called a “header” that provides more information about who sent the message and where it came from. Understanding the header information can be difficult, but if you ever receive an E-mail message that is belligerent, threatening, or contains material that makes you feel uncomfortable, you should **report** it to your Internet service provider and ask them to investigate where it came from.

Caution Be careful how you respond to E-mail from people you don’t know. Remember, the sender might not be who he or she seems to be. Never send a photograph of yourself or any personal information to someone you don’t know. Also, E-mail can easily be copied and forwarded to others. So if you do send personal information to friends, be sure that they are willing to respect your privacy.

In general, it’s best not to respond to spam mail or mail from someone you don’t know. By responding, you are verifying to the sender that you have a valid E-mail address, and that information can be used to encourage a person who may send inappropriate E-mails or get you on even more lists. If you receive a message that contains material that is sexually explicit, violent, or advocates something that is illegal or simply makes you feel uncomfortable, show it to your parents and **report** that message to your Internet service provider. You can usually find that address on the service’s main web page (www.servicename.com). When in doubt, report the message to postmaster@servicename.com (substitute the name of your service for “servicename”).

Newsgroups, Forums, and Bulletin Boards

Newsgroups (sometimes called bulletin boards or forums) are places where you can read and post messages or download or upload files. Unlike chat-rooms, newsgroups are not live or “real time.” If you post a message it remains on the newsgroup for people to look at later. Newsgroups can also be used to post files including computer programs, pictures, illustrations, and stories.

Did You Know? There are newsgroups on almost every possible subject, and they are often used as ways to get questions answered and share information about hobbies, musical groups, or any other subject of interest. Unfortunately, newsgroups, like other areas of cyberspace, have risks.

Caution The biggest risk is that you might post something that reveals information about yourself. Even if you are responding to a particular individual’s posting, what you type, in most cases, is available for anyone to see. So, once again, remember the basic rules and never

reveal identifying information about yourself. In many cases, the mere act of posting something makes your E-mail address public. Even if you don't say anything revealing, your address will be available for people to send you E-mail that could be bothersome, and newsgroups are a favourite place for people who send out junk mail ("spam") to gather addresses.

There are newsgroups that contain sexually explicit stories, illustrations, and photographs. In some cases, this material may be illegal, especially if it contains images of people who are younger than the age of 18 or certain other material that has been defined as "obscene." Some of this material can be disturbing and should be avoided. It is dangerous to post anything in these types of groups because anything you type reveals your E-mail address which could reveal your identity. Remember, anytime you post to a newsgroup you are broadcasting your E-mail address, even if you don't include your actual name.

Basic Rules of Online Safety

The most important thing to remember is that when you're online in any kind of a public forum, you're out in public and anyone can read whatever you post. You should never post anything on the Internet that you wouldn't want known to the public at large. You should also remember that people you meet in cyberspace might not be who they seem to be.

Keep Your Identity Private

If you're in any type of public forum, avoid giving out your full name, your mailing address, your telephone number, the name of your school, or any other information that could help someone determine your actual identity. The same applies to your family and friends. Never reveal anything about other people that could possibly get them into trouble.

Never Get Together With Someone You "Meet" Online

The biggest danger to your safety is if you get together with someone you "meet" online. Remember, you never know for certain if people you meet online are who they say they are. If you do feel it's appropriate to meet with someone, discuss it with your parents and never go to the meeting by yourself. Arrange to meet in a public place, like a coffee shop or mall that you (not just the other person) are familiar and comfortable with, and never go alone. The safest procedure is to have your parents talk with the parents of the other person and for both of you to bring your parents along on the first meeting.

Never Respond to E-mail, Chat Comments, or Newsgroup Messages That Are Hostile, Belligerent, Inappropriate, Or In Any Way Make You Feel Uncomfortable

It isn't your fault if you get a message that is mean or in any way makes you feel uncomfortable. If you get such a message, don't respond. Instead, show it to your parents or a trusted adult to see if there is anything you can do to make it stop. Sending a response just encourages the person.

Talk with Your Parents About Their Expectations and Ground Rules for Going Online

It's important that you and your parents are on the same channel when it comes to your online activities. This includes when you can go online, how long you can stay online, and what activities you can do online. Communicating with your parents doesn't mean that you have to give up your privacy. It just means that you come to an agreement based on mutual

trust and understanding. While you're at it, perhaps you can help your parents/guardian a better understand the Internet, what it can be used for, and how it is helpful for teens.

Tips by Teenagers for Teenagers

Remember - A million times before you've heard that honesty is the best policy. Most people don't believe that, though. So when you're out there in cyberspace, watch yourself. You never know when 5'6", blond and female could actually mean 6'3", hairy and male. Don't believe everything you see online.

Be wary of those who want to know too much. There's no rule that says you have to tell them where you live, what your last name is, or anything else personal. Your business is your business. Let them stick to theirs. And trust your instincts. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, leave.

If you're planning on meeting up with somebody you met online, bring a friend, or even your parents, along with you and encourage your online acquaintance to bring theirs, too. It sounds stupid, but it's definitely the smart idea. At the very least, make sure your real friends know what you're doing.

Before you take a running leap at the streets and a hard-knock life, let somebody know how you're feeling. Try talking to an understanding relative or friend, or call the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000. They are a better, more trustworthy resource than a stranger in a chat room.

If you get suspicious e-mails, files, or pictures from someone you don't know and trust, trash them just like any other junk mail. You could have a lot to lose by trusting someone you've never even met. The same goes for clicking links or URLs that look suspicious - just don't do it.

Avoid chat-rooms or discussion areas that look sketchy or provocative, and don't let people online trick you into thinking of them as real-life friends if you've never met them in person. Just the same, don't let people goad you into online fights. If you go looking for trouble on the Internet, you'll find it, and things can get out of control really fast.

NETTIQUETTE ONLINE

Responsibility in a Virtual World

As the Internet continues to evolve, so do the issues that impact the way we use it. From privacy, security and freedom of speech, to honesty and consideration in the way we interact with others, we all have a responsibility to preserve and protect its unique character. That means recognizing that while the medium is in many ways a reflection of the physical world, it is in other ways, fundamentally different manifesting its own customs and practices.

We expect other drivers to observe the rules of the road and the same is true as we travel through cyberspace. Here are a few pointers about "netiquette" whilst online.

Avoid writing email messages or posting in newsgroups in all **capitals**

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING!

To add humour and personality to your messages, use **smileys**, also known as **emoticons**, expressions you create from the characters on your keyboard. A few popular ones include:

:~)	Happy	:~e	Disappointed
:-(Sad	:~<	Mad
:~o	Surprised	:~D	Laughing
:~@	Screaming	;~)	Winking
:~I	Indifferent		

Remember that anything you post to a newsgroup or type during a chat session is a public comment. You never know who's reading it, or who may copy it and spread it around.

When posting a message to a public bulletin board, forum, or newsgroup, stick to the topic. Don't indiscriminately post unrelated comments, or worse--advertisements--to every newsgroup you can think of. This practice, known as **spamming**, will quickly lead to another unpleasant Internet practice, **flaming**. What is flaming? Sometimes you might offend someone unintentionally. Be prepared to receive some angry e-mail or be treated rudely in a public discussion. This is called being **flamed**. If you attack back, you will spark a **flame war**. To contain the heat, the best response usually is no response at all.

If you post an ad to a newsgroup, or send it in an e-mail, clearly identify it in the subject line. That way people who aren't interested can delete it

To keep messages short, use some common abbreviations:

<BTW> means "by the way."

A <G> enclosed in brackets indicates grinning.

A good one to keep handy in case you're worried about offending someone is <IMHO> -- In My Humble Opinion.

A fun one is <ROTFL>, which stands for Rolling on the Floor Laughing

INTERNET HEADLINES

The continuing growth of the Internet means it is rarely out of the news. In addition to the much publicised cases involving threats to young people it is now also government and corporate responsibility for the Internet and its users that is increasingly being highlighted.

Police Chief slams Yahoo chat-room attitude

In 2000 The Metropolitan Police joined the growing list of critics urging Yahoo! to act against paedophiles using its chat-room services and called upon the industry to act more responsibly. They were joined by various children's charities who lambasted the internet giant for 'appalling apathy', and creating a tailor made environment for paedophiles where they could target users with pinpoint accuracy. The furore arose after the Patrick Green case where the paedophile lured a 13 year old girl via a Yahoo chat-room before raping her.

By November, and after a humiliating series of reports, Yahoo!'s UK managing director, Martina King, finally agreed to a meeting with the charity Child Net. She promised a zero tolerance strategy against paedophiles, and the appointment of an inspector to deal with the problem. She said "I will do everything I can to ensure children here [in the UK] don't meet these monsters using any Yahoo! products. I promise you that." But Yahoo! took no steps to follow through on these plans, despite several promises to the contrary. In February, Yahoo!'s UK arm announced it was altering its Instant Messenger client so users downloading the new client available on yahoo.co.uk would not be able to get into American rooms where Greene's victim met her assailant.

'Paedophiles face crackdown - online and offline' task force on child protection on the Internet 9 July 2001

New laws to tackle paedophiles who prey on children using the Internet were among measures recommended to Home Secretary David Blunkett as the Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet made its first interim report to him today. After three months of intensive work to examine legislation, online child protection measures, and police training and relations with the industry involved in providing Internet services in the UK, the Task Force reported to the Home Secretary with a range of proposals.

Receiving the Task Force proposals at an oral briefing today, Mr Blunkett thanked members for their efforts to date, promising to consult on their proposals over the summer with a view to legislating where necessary as soon as possible:

"Protecting our children, whether on the Internet or anywhere else has to be our top priority. The Internet brings massive benefits, opening up a world of opportunities for young people, but sadly, it also brings new risks from paedophiles who try to abuse their trust.

"I will be consulting Government colleagues and the legal profession over the summer to ensure that we can place new anti-grooming laws on the statute books as soon as possible. There should be no hiding places, online or offline, for the insidious activities of paedophiles.

"The police, the industry involved in providing Internet services in the UK and child protection organisations represented on the Task Force are to be congratulated for delivering some impressive results in a short space of time. And I look forward to seeing further progress to make the UK the best and safest place in the world for children to use the Internet."

Escape into cyberspace

“He wasn’t much to look at, I suppose, but he spoke to me like I was an adult and that always works. Sweeties or puppies for the under tens, but if you want a fourteen year old, just ask her if she wants to go for a drink somewhere, like it’s the most natural thing in the world. Ten seconds later I was in the car and that’s how it began”.

Jenny – a/s/l?

Internet incidents fill the news on an increasingly regular basis. For many it seems, there is an addictive thrill in being of no age, no gender, no past. The Internet appears as an infinite sequence of opening portals, of menus and corridors that let you into brief painless encounters, but what happens when they infiltrate real life? In many cases the momentary pleasures of stepping into another world and escaping into cyberspace result in criminal investigations and distressed families making grief stricken public appeals.

Marine 'thought schoolgirl was 19'

On 15th July 2003 12 year old Shevaun Pennington left her home in Wigan to meet up with Toby Studabaker 31, an ex Marine she had met over the Internet. The academically gifted youngster, who spent most of her spare time using Internet chat-rooms, left home at 7.30am on Saturday, telling her parents she was joining friends on a shopping trip. That evening they flew together to France provoking a cross continent search for the missing school girl. Police believed Shevaun may have thought she was e-mailing a teenager, while Mr Studabaker may have believed Shevaun was an adult.

Studabaker's brother Toby said, "If he had known she wasn't the age she said she was, he wouldn't have agreed to meet her"

Shevaun's father said: "She has plenty of friends and no problems that we can think of that would make her run away. We knew that she was talking to people online, but we didn't know that there was anyone in particular. On some occasions she was on the Internet for 11 hours."

Later into the investigation officials said that police found child pornography on Studabaker's computer, and evidence that the ex-Marine knew Shevaun Pennington was only 12 years old. The couple were spotted in Germany where Studabaker was arrested for abduction and Shevaun returned to England to be re-united with her family. **Manchester Evening News**

“ so they say Conrad was entrapped. They say he was just an ordinary guy who got himself involved in some sick game with some sick woman. Not his fault, poor Conrad. But he was a grown man, a family man with responsibilities. Didn't he ever stop and think, hey this is dangerous?”

Livia a/s/l?

Councillors Kinky Net Photo's emailed to colleagues.

A Councillor's Internet fling was exposed when revealing pictures of himself were e-mailed to his colleagues. The councillor said, ***"It was pure escapism, I was at a low ebb at the time"***

The married father of two sent sexual messages to his Web friend and attached photos of himself wearing inappropriate clothing in his bathroom. They were forwarded to every member of Bracknell Forest Council by the recipient, who claimed to be a 23 year old woman looking for an older man. As a result Labour councillors are clamouring for the councillor's resignation saying he has brought the council into disrepute. He said ' I was the victim of a carefully planned attempt to discredit me". Police are investigating whether the councillor was the victim of a set up. **Metro 2003**

Wife leaves family for chat-room lover in Oz

When Margaret Fiore told her family she was nipping out to the shops they thought nothing of it. Instead of returning with the groceries the 40 year old flew to Australia to meet her Internet love, Steve Champion, a married father of one, from Adelaide.

Her husband Chris has been left to bring up their twelve year old son, Sam, alone. He said: **"She said she's been chatting to an Australian on the Internet but I just thought was harmless fun. He was on the other side of the world, I didn't see him as a threat."** Occasionally Mr Fiore even emailed the Australian and his wife, Carole himself. Mr Fiore said his wife spent up to 18 hours a day logged onto the Internet to chat with strangers. Unrepentant she blamed her addiction on him saying, **"Life with Chris was dull. We never talked which was why I spent most evenings logged on to the Net."** She added, **"I know I've caused a lot of pain but I don't regret what I've done."** Metro August 26th 2003

A HISTORY OF PARRICIDE....FAMOUS CASES DOWN THE YEARS

In the past

In Roman times the murder of a parent by a child was nothing less than an attack on the key societal unit, on the entity that gave that child a place in society - and thus on society itself. **Parricide**, to the Romans, was a kind of treason - treason against the inviolate family, treason against the state, and treason against the natural order of the universe itself. Unsurprisingly then the penalty was particularly brutal: a parricide was to be brutally beaten, then sewn into a leather sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape. The sack was then cast into the nearest body of water, where the criminal would drown as his bruised flesh was torn to pieces by the panicked animals. There is some doubt as to whether this penalty was ever actually carried out (it would have involved great difficulty, for monkeys are hard to come by in Italy.) Nevertheless, it was a grave, if symbolic, statement of the society's view of the severity of the crime.

In recent history

Lizzie Borden...a deceptive appearance?

**Lizzie Borden took an axe
And gave her mother forty whacks.
And when she saw what she had done,
She gave her father forty-one.**

At about 11.10 a.m. on Thursday August 4th 1892, at No. 92 Second Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, Bridget Sullivan, the hired girl in the household of Andrew J. Borden, resting in her attic room was startled to hear Lizzie Borden, Andrew's daughter, cry out, "Maggie, come down!"

"What's the matter?" Bridget (called "Maggie" by the Borden sisters) asked. "Come down quick! Father's dead! Somebody's come in and killed him!"

The Lizzie Borden case has mystified and fascinated those interested in crime for over one hundred years. Very few cases in American history have attracted as much attention as the hatchet murders of Andrew J. Borden and his wife, Abby Borden. The bloodiness of the acts in an otherwise respectable late nineteenth century domestic setting is startling. Along with the gruesome nature of the crimes is the unexpected character of the accused, not a hatchet-wielding maniac, but a church-going, Sunday-school-teaching, respectable, spinster-daughter, charged with parricide, the murder of parents - a crime worthy of Classical Greek tragedy.

This is a murder case in which the accused is found not guilty for the violent and bloody murders of two people. There were the unusual circumstances considering that it was an era of swift justice, of vast newspaper coverage, evidence that was almost entirely circumstantial, passionately divided public opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the accused, incompetent prosecution, and acquittal.

If the phrase "dysfunctional family" had been in vogue at the turn of the century, no doubt someone would have tagged the Bordens with it.

"What does the 'A' stand for? – its stands for Andrew. That's just asking for it. You don't call your daughter Andrew and expect her to never contemplate putting an axe through your skull. It was her father's name. Says it all really. Self –centred bastard."
Livia – a/s/l?

For more info about the Borden Family go to : www.halfmoon.org/borden/

More recently

Whilst the declaration of the Borden family as dysfunctional would not have been likely in the 1800's and certainly not considered as a factor in a defence, stability of family life and family relations are now key factors taken into consideration in cases of parricide in the modern age.

The Menendez murders: A desperate act of escape?

On 20th August 1989 Eric and Lyle Menendez killed their mother and father at their family home in Beverley Hills, L.A.

Each brother complained to the other about how domineering and controlling their father was, how impossible it was for either brother to please him, how he planned to disinherit both brothers from his will and how poorly he treated their mother. The brothers rationalized that if they killed their father, they would have to kill their mother because she could not survive emotionally without their father. She could also be a living witness to the crime they were about to commit. The older brother wanted to plan the murders so that they would be as "perfect as could be," but the younger brother could not wait and insisted that the murders take place as soon as possible.

During the five-month trial, jurors heard testimony of how the brothers went to San Diego, bought shotguns, and a few days later blasted their parents, even pausing to reload on realising that their mother, though already shot was still alive. On 20th March 1996 both brothers were found guilty of first degree murder

"Weird families happen. Weird things happen inside of them," a lawyer told jurors in the trial.

For further info about the Menendez trial go to: <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9603/menendez/20/wrap/>