Cyber Wellness

The Singapore government recognizes that it is important that students acquire key cyber wellness skills for the ICT environment. Thus, there are series of projects that contextualize cyber wellness education so as to teach to the students.

Under this key strand, there are a series of projects:

- Cyber Wellness Framework
- Cyber Wellness Research
- Cyber Wellness Resources
- Cyber Wellness Students Ambassadors Program (CWSAP)

Projects under Cyber Wellness

Cyber Wellness Framework

Overview
Under the iN2015 masterplan 3, MOE has developed a cyber-wellness framework programme aimed at helping schools implement several cyber wellness programmes for their students. It is aimed at being a rough guideline for the schools to improvise and customise the cyber-wellness plans to cater to their respective students according to their specific needs.

Objectives
The programme aims at developing in students a natural sense of protecting and taking responsibility for his/her actions in cyberspace. It aims for collaboration between the schools and the parents in effectively educating the students on cyber welfare.

Strategies
The Cyber wellness frameworks work on two guiding principles of “Respect for Self and Others” and “Safe and Responsible Use”. Under the former principle, while online students are required to uphold their dignity and show their respect to other by not indulging in activities such as misusing other’s work or carry out something that is undesirable to others. Whereas under the second principle, pupils need to comprehend the consequences of harmful and illegal online behaviours as well as learn ways in which they can prevent themselves from the dangers online and also protect them once encountered such dangers. In addition, pupils also need to be self-evaluative of their online behaviours.

The programme is structured in a 3-step process of Sense, Think and Act. The programme aims to inculcate these three steps into the students as steps of their thought process while at cyberspace. The three steps are to create a sense of understanding of the possible risks of online activities, to be able to react to and analyse different online encounters and to apply these skills while engaging in cyber activities.

Implementation
Since its inception several schools such as Ai Tong School has adopted the cyber wellness framework. They have used the framework to deliver the knowledge and skills to their students in many different ways. Various schools have incorporated the topic of cyber wellness into the Civics and Moral Education syllabus and also into other relevant subjects making sure that each and every one of their students is aware of cyber wellness.

Cyber Wellness Research

Launched in 2009, the Cyber Wellness Research was initiated by MOE to research on the students’ online behavioural patterns and mobile technology usage patterns. It is also aimed at understanding the issues students come across in using these technologies and accordingly devise strategies to solve them. The research aims to study the new and possibly unknown cyber wellness issues and hence formulate effective strategies to tackle them.

Based on the findings from the research and analysis of the same, an online evaluation device is set to be developed which is aimed for schools to review and access the effectiveness of their cyber wellness programme for their students. MOE has included the cyber wellness research as part of its Inter-Ministry Cyber Wellness Steering Committee (ICSC)-supported projects through which it aims to get proposals from reputable organisations to effectively carry out these projects.
Cyber Wellness Resources

The Cyber Wellness Resources programme was commissioned by MOE to support schools in providing resources related to cyber wellness. [8] The resources provided to the schools include starter kits comprising basic ideas for teachers to use in their lessons and also books for students. Comic books containing cyber wellness content have been published by MOE starting from 2008 and have been used by various schools such as Al Tong School [9]. The comic books serve as interesting ways of educating the students of useful information on cyberspace activities. Furthermore, a resourceful online portal for the schools, students and parents has been made available through which they can access information on the relevant cyber wellness. [10]

Cyber Wellness Students Ambassadors Programme (CWSAP)

Overview
On 23rd November 2009, the Cyber Wellness Students Ambassadors Programme was unveiled by MOE, IDA and Microsoft. This programme is a sub-part of the Backpack Live which is a four year initiative by MOE, IDA and Microsoft Singapore launched on 16 July 2009.[11] It was launched to encourage the students through peer learning to use the Information and Communication Technologies safely and responsibly.

Objectives
The programme aims to first equip the necessary knowledge and skills about the ways to be ICT smart to a set of students who will be known as Cyber Wellness Student Ambassadors from every school. [12] Then, through these student ambassadors’ influence on other students at the respective schools, the knowledge is expected to be imparted to the other students as well. [13] This is aimed to be achieved through several student-led activities to engage the entire pool of students. The training for the student ambassadors is done through an annual student conference where they will be imparted with necessary knowledge and leadership skills. Moreover, the conference also includes a student experience sharing session by means of which the previous student ambassadors are able to share their experiences and give some tips to their successors. The programme’s goal is not only to impart the necessary cyber wellness skills to the students, but also give schools extra support for their respective cyber wellness education initiatives. [14]

Implementation
Since its commencement in 2009, several schools have participated in this programme. Statistics show that 226 primary schools, secondary schools and junior colleges have participated in this programme in the year 2011. To further encourage the students, the Cyber Wellness Student Ambassador Recognition (STAR) award was introduced at the Cyber Wellness Student Ambassadors’ Conference 2011. The winning schools were West View Primary School, Radin Mas Primary School and Yuhua Primary School. The winning activities include cyber wellness related assembly programs, blogging and video and other materials distributed to students. [15]

Importance of Cyber Wellness in the use of ICT

The world we live in today is probably the period that utilises technology the most for various purposes. The last decade or so has seen the influx of ICT into different industries of which the Education sector is a major one. ICT has been applied for the purpose of education in different ways. However, alongside benefits ICT brings a number of security concerns such as cyber bullying and malicious websites. These problems can come in any form in the ICT used for education and thus, the Cyber Wellness Research is aptly implemented to identify the specific cyber wellness issue faced by the students. Identifying the cyber wellness issues alone is not sufficient as students need to aware of such issues and able to combat them to guard them against the problems. This has been taken care of with the Cyber Wellness Framework, Cyber Wellness Students Ambassadors programme and Cyber Wellness Resources put in place which guides the students in tackling cybercrime interactively and methodically. The four programmes in place cover multiple dimensions to combat cyber wellness issues faced by the education sector and if implemented across the educational institutions in Singapore, the cyber wellness issues will be minimised.
References
