



Weapon against bullying

Ashleigh James | 15th February 2010



CYBER bullying by phone could soon be a thing of the past.

Tweed parents have access to a product that monitors their child's mobile phone usage and alerts them to instances of bullying.

Introduced in the United States in 2007, My Mobile Watchdog is a safety tool that logs and stores copies of all mobile activity, including text messages, phone calls, emails, picture messages and websites accessed.

A report by the Youth Advisory Council of NSW in 2008 found young people were most commonly bullied through social networking websites, in chat rooms and by e-mail, all of which are accessible on smart phones.

Managing director of Australia's distributing agent, Geoff Sondergeld from Device Connections, said parents could be instantly alerted to unauthorised or potentially harmful use.

"Kids want highly functional mobile phones that allow them to access the same communication tools they would use on their home computer," Mr Sondergeld said.

"Generally speaking, parents are not very tech-savvy and are usually unaware of their child's intricate social communication network. My Mobile Watchdog provides a way of bridging the gap and encourages discussion."

Sgt Stuart Crawford from Tweed Heads police welcomed the new software to our shores.

"Kids rely heavily on their mobile phones these days to communicate with their friends, whether it's appropriate or not," Sgt Crawford said.

"Something like this would always be welcome, but whether people are going to use it or not is another thing."

Sgt Crawford said growing instances of cyber bullying saw the need for parents to be vigilant.

"This could give parents an opportunity to monitor their kids, and who they talk to," Sgt Crawford said.

"It also gives parents the opportunity to watch what they are doing on Facebook, and restrict access to sites that are inappropriate.

"No doubt I would use it with my children."

Banora Point High School principal June Rogan agreed, and said with the increasing number of children using mobile phones, software like this could make a difference.

"I think it will be very useful for parents to monitor who is contacting their children," Ms Rogan said.

"Many children who are victims of bullying don't tell their parents or teachers about it, because they think it might make it worse for themselves."

Visit www.mymobilewatchdog.com.au.



Banora Point High School principal June Rogan with school captain Larissa Gray.

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