

Health and Safety Issues

When you think about health and safety issues there is a multitude of things that may come to mind. When we think about technology and safety issues we often think about protecting our computers and privacy. While those are very important issues, the focus here is on health and safety issues related to the proper use and disposal of technology.

On Healthy Computing's website there was a section that focused on kids and safety measures that are recommended when dealing with different technologies. The site discussed four of the common areas of injuries in children. The four areas discussed were Computers, Backpacks, Gaming and Mobile Devices.

I'm familiar with ergonomics and many of the things discussed in the computer section were very similar to safety precautions adults should also take, however, there were some things that were enlightening. The article discussed how office chairs are not typically designed for smaller children and the importance of making adjustments to better fit a child. In a classroom or school computer lab this is unlikely to be an issue, but in the home this may be an issue. Other things pointed out were the position of the monitor, the use of smaller mice and keyboards and the importance of taking breaks. When it comes to taking breaks adults would play an important role because children often do not keep track of time well.

Gaming and Mobile Devices were also discussed. Gaming is similar to computer usage in many ways. The important things noted were to take breaks allowing muscles to rest and recover, change positions, and try to use features that decrease repetitive actions if possible. The gaming section really stressed combining proper usage with the correct hardware.

Mobile devices are becoming ever more common in general but also with children and teens. When it comes to mobile devices there are some safety measures to prevent things such as stress and discomfort. It is important to wear a headset if possible, otherwise switching ears from time to time when talking on the phone helps distribute the stress and allows rest. An injury from repeat keying is a concern but as with many of the other technologies a key factor in prevention is allowing the proper rest between repetitive actions.

One main common theme discussed on the different websites was to have the proper setup for your workspace. Microsoft's Healthy Computing Guide provided guidelines for setting up your workspace in a way that promotes healthy habits. The article starts off with a health warning about the use of mice and keyboards. As trivial as it may sound, people actually do develop

different health issues from poor ergonomics. The guide includes pictures and descriptions on setting up your workspace. The key points were to position yourself, going lightly (controlling your physical force), taking breaks, and overall maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The goal is to have a safe and comfortable workspace as many of these articles agree. The main objective is preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) by developing healthy habits.

Disposal

The focus of the last recommended websites was on proper disposal and removal of computers and other electronics. There are many harmful chemicals in these products and failure to dispose of them properly can cause environmental and health hazards.

When it comes to old electronics we have the options of recycling, reusing, donating or disposing. It's important that we consider the options and choose wisely. Computerhope.com provides a wide range of resources that are related to disposal. There is information about recycling batteries, computer dismantling services, computer manufactures that provide recycling options, places that recycle ink cartridges, and contact information. Ohiodropoff.com provides a number of recycling services and their website has a list of drop off locations, they also offer free pickup for corporations.

The readings provided a lot of good information about making the right choices when dealing with computers and technologies. There are different safety precautions that we all should take when working on computers. It is also important to educate students on the proper use of technology and promote healthy work habits. Throughout the readings there was mention of avoiding repetitive actions, taking breaks, and having the right equipment. While many of the suggestions may seem like common sense, there are still a lot of people who do not know or just don't take the time to make the necessary improvements. People often wait until they actually begin to have issues before making any changes. The other part of the readings talked about disposing of technologies correctly. When possible donate unused electronics but when that is not an option it's important to look into the proper disposal methods. We can protect ourselves by practicing computer safety and protect the earth by practicing proper disposal.

References

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