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Learn to keep safe on the net

WITH online crime and threats on the increase, local internet users can look forward to a completely revamped Be Safe Online workshop hosted by the Manjimup Family and Manjimup Volunteer Resource centres next week.

The workshop is being held in conjunction with Community Safety Month October, focusing on threats including scams, phishing attempts and hoaxes, while also taking a close look at cyber bullying, the safe use of social networking sites and online shopping.

"Everybody pretty much gets a virus scanner and firewall package installed now," family centre coordinator Andre Foulon said.

"We will spend less time on that and rather look at types of cyber crime, their rapidly changing methods and

how to stay ahead of fraudsters and hackers."

Mr Foulon said participants would get pointers to Government and other sites, as well as email alert lists, which keep them updated on the latest threats and provide safety recommendations and procedures.

"Family PC use arrangements will also be under the microscope, so parents understand they cannot rely on filtering software alone to keep nasty content and bullies in check," he said.

Mr Foulon said parental vigilance also needed to extend to mobile phone use and gaming.

Risks were not restricted to bullying but also included normalisation of violence, swapping of sexually explicit material and social isolation.

"Bullies can reach right into an adolescent's bedroom via mobile, games sell better the gorier they are and thousands of online friends get in the way of the handful of personal mates that really count," Mr Foulon said.

The workshop will also have an extended "live and dangerous" session, where he would take participants to online banking sites, MySpace and eBay to explore the safe use of banking.

The Be Safe Online workshop will be held at the Manjimup Volunteer Resource Centre from 1pm to 4pm on Wednesday, October 7.

Bookings are essential, call 9777 2774.