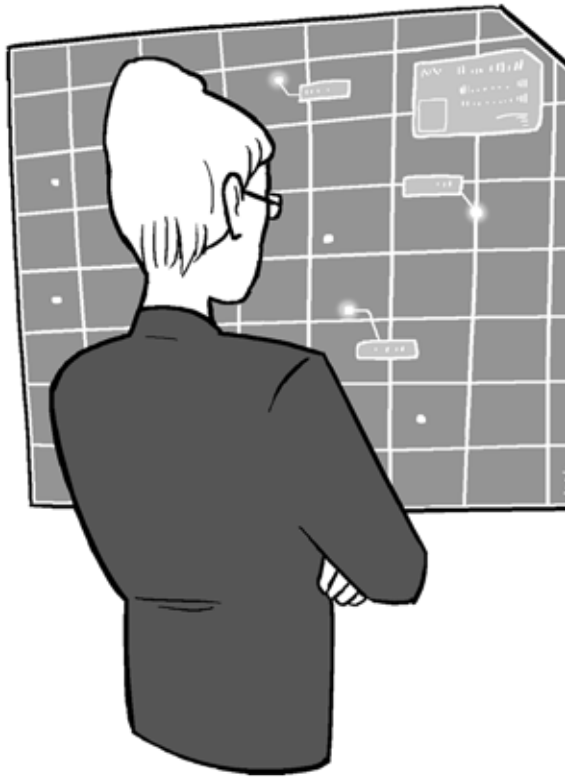


CHILD WEEKLY



Taking Chances

While electronic tags may seem like a practical idea and may enable us to track our child's movements, we must wonder why they are at all necessary in the first place.

Has the world gone so mad that every child is likely to be kidnapped?

Ironically, the French company that makes child security tags, Bluelinea, has chosen not to sell them to French crèches or schools.

As its chief executive admitted: "There is an unfortunate side effect with fitting tags to minors: they lose all sense of responsibility." Not to men-

tion it also infringes the privacy and individual rights of children.

Whilst panic-stricken helicopter parents may welcome such tags, it raises serious issues about the nature of parenting and the degree to which they should swoop and hover over their children. Evidently parents are so fearful that they are reluctant to let their children explore and take risks. But how are youngsters likely to react when we treat them as if their every move in the big wide world needs a security guard.

Such fear tends to make youngsters more anxious. They are quick to believe that we are living in a dangerous world and that the only relatively safe place is in front of a digital screen – supposedly safe from the many horrors that can befall them in the big bogey man's world outside.

Sensible parents would surely argue that it is through leaving our comfort zones, and taking measured risks, that we grow. As experts point out, in some areas, parents still need to be heavy-handed to foster children's development. The "soft" options such as the attraction of computer games have the potential to "rewire" children's brains in harmful ways.

Experts believe that kids need "real play" (as opposed to passive, screen-based entertainment), free time and firsthand interaction with the world.

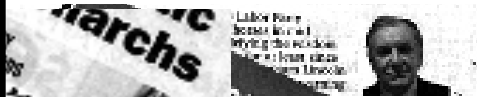
**Ms Anita Crossway, Executive Officer
ParentsWatch** (*"Helping you to take care"*)



Would you like it if Big Brother was tracking you constantly? These tracking tools are likely to make children feel anxious and self-conscious. They come with a tag that says "danger" and we end up filling our children with suspicion and dread.

In addition, becoming overreliant on technology, means that we lose our guard and forget about basic supervision. In their turn, children become so accustomed to constant watching that they may not function properly without it. There have been cases where children exploit these devices to gain attention. It's called the "cry wolf" syndrome. **John Jeffries, Privacy Officer**

TECHNIQUES



CHECKLIST

Reasoning and persuasive tactics	Author's example (Ms Crossway)	Purpose
1. Author's key reasons and the target audience	<p>1. In a practical tone, and from her disinterested perspective as Parents' Watch chief executive, Ms Crossway believes that parents' are too obsessed with security.</p> <p>2. Ms Crossway is sceptical of tags because they are intrusive and undermine the child's sense of responsibility</p>	Seeks to build upon her reputation and gain trust from readers.
2. Evidence: facts, statistics, surveys, quotes.	Reference to Bluelinea (reputable company)	they are not using the tags because of the effect on children; taking a principled stance (reassuring and trustworthy)
3. Evidence : "people" stories.		
4.. Reasoning tactics: Give examples. How does the author attack or criticise opponents?	Attack on parents: sets up parents for ridicule (metaphor with negative connotations: the metaphor compares parents with a hovering and swooping helicopter).	challenges parenting style of those who rely on tags and suggests they are not helping children to grow
5. What is the author's tone and style? Give examples.	<p>In a high-minded tone, Ms Crossway reminds parents about the rights of children.</p> <p>Ms Crossway condemns parents in a sarcastic way for their tendency to protect their children to excess.</p> <p>Parents are fearful of the "bogey man"; mocking and deriding tone</p>	<p>The author is sceptical of the use of the tags especially because of the French company's reluctance to use them.</p> <p>shaming tactics</p> <p>fear tactics: children's development will be inhibited</p>
4. What appeals does the author use? Give examples	<p>an appeal to common sense: Ms Crossway believes that sensible parents will give children the opportunities to explore the world on their own and grow up without being constantly watched; appeal to moral values</p> <p>an appeal to privacy: Ms Crossway is concerned that the tags are undermining privacy and infringing the rights of children. This is an indirect appeal to privacy.</p>	<p>Ms Crossway's common-sense approach seeks to reassure parents about the exposure to danger. This is also an appeal to duty of care and parents' sense of responsibility that differs from the previous author's.</p> <p>the "soft options" ; discrediting parents and children who do not take responsibility seriously</p>
7. Word choice and figurative language.	hyperbole: "Has the world gone so mad..." and "we treat them as if their every move in the big wide world needs a security guard".	Challenge parents to think about their extreme behaviour.

Remember her? Don't let it be you: Taking it further.

Which techniques are used to arouse parents' fear?

- ◆ The author uses the anecdote in order to present a cruel and dangerous world. The recount of Madeleine McCann provokes parents' anxieties.
- ◆ The fearful reference to the child being "snatched from under her parents' nose" implies that the parents may be reckless.
- ◆ The author asks rhetorically, "Do you really want this to happen to you?", to focus our attention on the consequences of the child's disappearance.
- ◆ The author uses negative words to describe a "cruel world where perverts and kidnapers lurk."

How does Mr Toffler seek to reassure his audience?

- ◆ The author seeks our approval for the tag by directing our sympathy towards Madeleine. He also earns our trust by showing that he is most concerned about safety and the welfare of children.
- ◆ The author minimises (or downplays) the tag's intrusive nature. "They don't feel a thing". "How easy is that?"
- ◆ The author uses a generalisation to depict children as naturally mischievous. Once again, this shows that such a tag is necessary and therefore parents should not be embarrassed or ashamed to use such a device.
- ◆ Appeal to family values and leadership: parents are depicted as sensible, and responsible if they use the tag.
- ◆ Emotional appeals: Parents are also "spared the pain" that arises from disastrous occurrences.

Paragraph practice: (Mr Albin Toffler, Chief, CloseConnect) p. 30

(Tone and view) In a tone that ranges from solicitous and assertive to upstanding, Mr Toffler commends the Toddler Tag to parents, whilst simultaneously attempting to deflect criticisms of bias. **(purpose)** Evidently, he/she seeks to gain financially from parents' support and he uses a range of persuasive devices that pander to parents' desire to protecting their children in the best possible manner. **(technique and purpose)** For example, the real-life example of Madeline McCann is designed to evoke parents' worst nightmare – the kidnapping of their children and thus reinforce the Tag as the "ultimate safety weapon". **(technique and purpose)** Mr Toffler also uses a generalisation to infer that "all children are mischievous" and disobedient in order to allay parents' concerns about the tag as being intrusive. **(tone and purpose)** Then a high-minded tone enables the author to adopt the high moral ground in order to reassure parents and encourage them to see the Toddler Tag as affording parents both "peace of mind" whilst exercising the requisite duty of care – the subtext is that parents should feel guilty should they not rely on such a Tag. This is a clever ploy to conceal notions of self-interest that are connected with their attempt to coerce parents.

Taking Chances: Ms Anita Crossway, p. 32

Write a paragraph relating to the author's tone and point of view:

(language choices/ technique and position) Using generalisations and an appeal to responsibility, she shames parents. She believes that they must recognise obsession with security is absurd and is curbing children's growth opportunities. Simultaneously, she encourages parents to see the practical consequences of their obsessive behaviour. **(Link between language choice and impact/purpose)** Her rhetorical question – "Has the world gone so mad? — hyperbolically suggests that they are acting likely "security guards", which challenges parents to see the folly of their excessive control and implies that they are absurdly anxious. This claim is reinforced by the metaphor of "panic-stricken helicopter parents" that carries negative connotations and once again impugns **(criticises)** their parenting style. She claims that such parents tend to "swoop and hover" to the detriment of their child's development. She reinforces her claims with evidence from the manufacturer, BlueLinea, and its reluctance to use Tags to show that she is not biased.