

Expert's advice to parents: Use same apps as your kids to guide them online

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Use the same apps as your children – that is the advice to parents from a tech expert.

In a public lecture on parenting in the digital age, Professor Lim Sun Sun said that, this way, any advice to children will be more credible, since they know that their parents understand the apps' features and potential pitfalls.

"It's important for parents to keep abreast of technology," said Prof Lim, a professor of communications and technology at the Singapore Management University (SMU) College of Integrative Stud-

ies. "If you don't know it, your child is just going to say 'you don't get it, you don't understand!'"

"Go into the platform your kids are using, so you know what is at stake."

And for those who still struggle, ask your child to teach you, she said on April 5, adding: "That role reversal is very satisfying for kids."

This came during her talk on growing up in a world fuelled by artificial intelligence (AI), an event in the Ministry of Education's Ideas Festival. It comprises a series of talks and workshops for students, enthusiasts and professionals on humanities-related topics in March and April.

Prof Lim researches the social

impact of technology and AI ethics, and is the vice-president of partnerships and engagement at SMU.

In the hour-long session, she gave the audience a sweeping overview of pressing concerns in the tech sector and what parents can do to guide young people online.

Her lecture covered the promises and perils of AI, which has been a boon for research and efficiency, but has led to the generation of misinformation and harmful content. Social media, too, has helped in spreading important messages, but can introduce young people to scams, and extremist or adult content, said Prof Lim.

She encouraged parents in atten-



If parents find themselves struggling with technology, they should get their children to teach them, said Professor Lim Sun Sun, giving a talk on April 5. "That role reversal is very satisfying for kids," she added. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

dance to adopt a calm tone with their children when addressing concerns over their online interactions.

"Very often with Asian families,

we can be very authoritarian," said Prof Lim. "But we should strive for an authoritative voice instead."

She said parents should also be mindful of online friendships that

children form, as these are important to them, adding: "Explain and discuss your rules, and it's important not to be judgmental. The moment we are, kids will tune out."

Using the same platform can help parents to build trust as they connect over similar topics, said Dr Jiw Hee Jhee, a communications professor at the Singapore Institute of Technology, who moderated the Q&A session at the lecture.

There is a lack of funding for trust and safety departments as compared with advertising budgets within tech companies, said Prof Lim, when asked about what kind of regulations can help to alleviate issues that plague social media platforms.

She said: "If we have regulations around required spending by tech companies on investments in health and safety features, I think that will allow us to see much greater technological innovation in that space."

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