

Suspend wi-fi in schools, says union chief following reports it causes ill-health

By DAILY MAIL REPORTER.

The rush to install wireless computer networks in schools may be jeopardising children's health and should be suspended pending a full safety inquiry, a teachers' chief said yesterday.

Philip Parkin said he is worried about reports linking wireless technology with loss of concentration, fatigue, reduced memory and headaches.

Mr Parkin, general secretary of Voice, formerly the Professional Association of Teachers, believes a generation of children are effectively 'guinea pigs in a large-scale experiment'.

Wi-fi systems use high frequency radio waves to transmit and receive data over distances of several hundred feet.

Users anywhere within range can surf the internet without needing a cable connection.

A majority of schools have already introduced wi-fi – a typical comprehensive has a network of at least ten transmitters.

Mr Parkin, whose 38,000-strong union is holding its annual conference in Daventry, Northamptonshire, this week, fears wi-fi radiation damages children's developing nervous systems and wants an investigation into longterm health risks.

He said schools should exercise caution until a review by the Health Protection Agency has been published

But he also questioned the terms of the review, arguing that it does not go far enough in examining all the radiation involved.

Voice is calling for a moratorium on new wi-fi networks and the suspension of existing wi-fi if possible. But wireless technology is likely to be a central feature of schools being rebuilt or refurbished under a massive programme.

A Government advisory body has said investing in hardwired equipment instead of wi-fi could create 'expensive white elephants'.

The Health Protection Agency currently advises that there is no reason why schools should not use wi-fi.



Health concern: Wi-fi in schools should be suspended pending a safety inquiry, says a union chief

'I was walking into a poison cloud'

Author Kate Figes said she was made ill after installing wi-fi in her Stoke Newington home.

The mother-of-two claimed she was sensitive to the technology's electromagnetic waves and scrapped it after feeling tired and nauseous.

She said: 'The day we installed wi-fi was the day I started to feel ill. When I walked through the front door it felt like walking into a cloud of poison.'

'Imagine being prodded all over your body by 1,000 fingers.'

'I got rid of anything I thought might be causing the problem, such as cordless phones, but that did not make things better.'

'I started to think it might be the wi-fi, so we scrapped that. That was when I felt better.'



Ill: Kate Figes claims wi-fi in her home left her tired and nauseous.

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