



## Internet Safety for your Children

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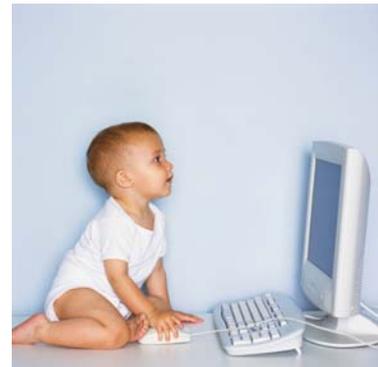
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## Privacy, Security and your Children

Parents are responsible for providing privacy and security on the Internet for their children. Parents should be diligent, responsible and consistent in always knowing where their children are surfing, which links they are clicking on, and the privacy policy of any website that asks for personal information, i.e., signing up for a gaming site.



Some Internet sites and emails try to trick users into downloading unwanted files, purchasing products and giving away information. Keeping your children safe may require extra steps such as setting up an Internet filter on your home computer and using passwords to limit full Internet browser access.

Kids interact online with friends, family and sometimes strangers. While most of these interactions are positive, sometimes the internet can lead to negative interactions with others: sexual exploitation and cyber bullying.

## What is the Internet?

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The internet is a worldwide network of computers providing a wealth of information and ideas for learning, recreation and business.



## Who Runs the Internet?

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No one. Anyone with a computer and software can put information and ideas on the Internet. Some information is accurate and some information is wildly inaccurate.

## Parents: Net Surfing is a Family Affair

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The internet is similar to any other communication vehicle such as television, radio, videos, or books. Your child needs your advice and guidance to make the most of the Internet experience.

- You have both the right and the responsibility to monitor, supervise and set conditions and boundaries for your child's use of the Internet. Every child develops intellectually, emotionally and physically in a unique way. You can best evaluate your child's readiness to use the Internet and judge their maturity to surf alone.
- If you are not familiar with the Internet, ask your local librarian, take a course at a community college, consult a friend, or ask your child!
- Review sites with your child and bookmark your favourites. When you come across material you disapprove of, make it an opportunity to reinforce your family's values.
- Be aware when your child is on-line. If you are concerned about what your child is accessing put your computer in the family room. If your children are young, remain in the room while they are exploring the Internet and check frequently to see what they are doing and where they are surfing on the Internet.
- Develop your own 'Acceptable Use Policy' at home, just as many schools and school libraries are implementing for Internet usage.



## Parents: Teach Your Children Well

The Internet enables children to learn how to search effectively for information, to become discriminating consumers of information, to develop on-line communication skills and to learn a measure of personal responsibility. Be aware that your journey on the Internet may not be a private one.



- Teach your children that strangers on the Internet are no different from strangers on the street, on the phone or at the mall.
- Never give out or post any family personal information, like your address, credit card numbers, phone numbers, cell numbers or photograph. It is surprisingly easy for strangers, or other young people your children have met online, to track down your children even with the smallest amount of information.
- **NEVER** give your computer passwords or PIN numbers to anyone. Change user names and passwords regularly.



- Use impersonal nicknames that do not give away any identifying information in chat programs and other sites.
- If your children are talking to people they don't know offline (for example, someone they only know through an online game), use a voice-mask so others don't know their age or gender.
- **DO NOT** believe everything you're told. You have no way of knowing who is telling the truth on the Internet.
- Alert your child to Internet marketing practices or gimmicks aimed at young consumers. If something sounds too good to be true; it probably is.
- Emphasize to your child the importance of telling you if someone whom they have met on the Internet wants to meet you in person.
- Ask your parents for permission before arranging to meet someone in person that you have met online. Make sure you meet in a public place and are not alone.
- Teach your children to share 'cyber secrets' and tell you if they see something frightening, offensive or distasteful on the Internet.
- If you share photos or videos, they can never be taken back. Once it's out there, it's there for the whole world -- including you, your parents and your extended family
- Unplug the webcam when it is not in use and avoid webcam chats. Participants can record live videos and you can't control where the images may end up.

- ➔ Do not let other people, including friends, convince you to do something they you are not comfortable in doing.
- ➔ Teach your child not to perform any unfamiliar computer commands that an on-line contact recommends. These commands may do irreparable damage to your computer.
- ➔ It is very important to report any abuse you encounter on the internet to the service provider, i.e. someone is misusing a service to communicate inappropriately with a minor.
- ➔ Report online child sexual exploitation to a reporting tip line [www.Cybertip.ca](http://www.Cybertip.ca) and the police.
- ➔ **NEVER** open email attachments or download files from unrecognized senders, sources or websites.
- ➔ Think about your online reputation. What you say and do online can reveal a lot about who you are and have an impact on how others view you.
- ➔ **ALWAYS** be aware of what a website may do with personal information or pictures. If a site does not have a privacy policy, don't disclose personal information.
- ➔ **REMEMBER** that once you write, upload or add information to the Internet there is no going back -- so think before you click.

## Internet Filters: How Do They Work?

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Most commercial software filters block words, phrases, subjects and sites on the web. Please read the information below to help you understand how the Internet Filters work.

Internet Filters require regular updating because thousands of new sites are added daily.

Internet Filters do not block all content that violates a particular family's values and beliefs.

Internet Filters do not always work as advertised. Testing shows that filters fail to block some sexually explicit material and sites.

Internet Filters do not adapt to the age and level of maturity of a particular child.

Internet Filters do not help your child learn to make independent judgements and to say "no".

The choices of words, ideas, and topics to be blocked are driven by the product owner's personal values, ideology, and political agenda.

## Using 'Netiquette'

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When interacting with other people online, help make sure your children's interactions are positive by encouraging them to abide by the common rules of "netiquette" (online etiquette):

- ➔ Don't say anything online that you would not repeat or say in person. How could this become an issue? The anonymity of the Internet may lead people to say things on the Internet that are inappropriate, rude or embarrassing. This can have offline consequences, like losing friends.
- ➔ Never deceive someone for malicious purposes. This means that you should not pretend to be someone else or lie to a person online
- ➔ Everything you write online could potentially be viewed by anyone. Some people tend to forget this and say things that they shouldn't say or that they would not want others to see.
- ➔ Respect someone's right to end a conversation with you. Not respecting the other person's wishes is a type of harassment and is disrespectful.

## Parents: Do You Know What to Watch Out for Online?



### Online Chatting

Chat rooms enable children to meet and talk to other children all over the world, but online people are not always who they seem to be – even web pals. Many paedophiles prey on children via the Internet. Parents please make sure that your children understand the following:

- ➔ It's so incredibly easy for people to lie about their age, sex, location, and intentions during an online chat.
- ➔ Chatting allows other people to send information that you do not want, such as, inappropriate messages, photos or videos. Teach your children to never reply to nasty or suggestive e-mail messages and if they receive such an e-mail to tell an adult right away.
- ➔ Cyber bullying can happen in online chat rooms.

### Photo Sharing

- ➔ Once you send a photo anywhere on the Internet it is out of your control.
- ➔ Photos on the Internet can be manipulated, possibly putting the people in the picture in a compromising situation.
- ➔ Photos sent to a private individual can easily be further distributed by that person.



- ➡ Photos posted online can be viewed and downloaded by anyone -- and distributed worldwide.



## Webcams

- ➡ When you are using a webcam, please be very careful especially with people you or your children do not know.
- ➡ Once a webcam broadcasts a video it can be captured by the other person's computer and saved for later viewing or distribution.
- ➡ If your computer has been hacked, another user could control your webcam via remote control. Please remember to unplug or cover your camera when it's not in use.
- ➡ Don't believe anyone who says that appearing in front of a webcam is a way to get a start in modelling or show business. Legitimate businesses **DO NOT** operate in this manner.

## Online gaming

- ➡ Many online games allow live text and voice chats making it easier for your children to accidentally or willingly disclose personal information to a stranger.

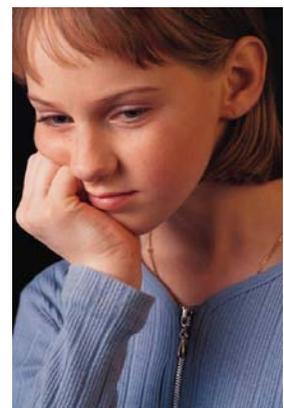
## Guidelines for Children

- ➡ Respect other people's privacy.
- ➡ Make sure your children get their friend's permission before posting anything online about them, especially photos.

## Is Your Child Experiencing Problems Online?

### Would you Know the Signs?

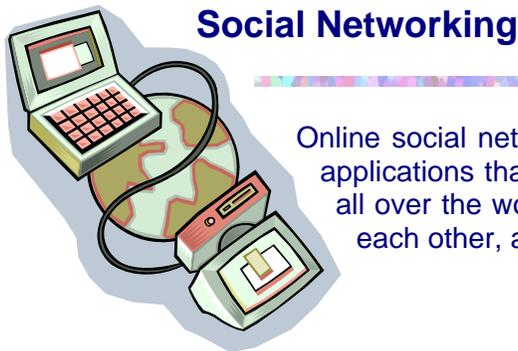
- ➡ Your child may begin to show signs that they are having problems online, i.e. acting withdrawn, spending extended periods of time on the computer, or suddenly staying away from the computer.
- ➡ People who want to exploit your children online may try to win them over by giving them lots of attention, compliments or gifts. They are sometimes patient and willing to work at gaining your kids trust for weeks or even months. Others may use threats or claim that they are in an emergency to convince your children to cooperate. Some are teenagers, and others may pose as teenagers online and develop a 'friendship' with your child with the goal of meeting them for sexual purposes. Some perpetrators will slowly and gradually introduce



sexual content into conversations, while others work faster, introducing sexual content very quickly.

## Avoid cyber-infections

Hackers, spyware, and viruses can gain access to home computers by tricking users into downloading infected files. The download is prompted by an action you have taken, sometimes just by visiting a website or opening an email. Teach your children to **NEVER** accept mysterious download requests from emails or websites.



## Social Networking

Online social networks, like Facebook and Twitter, are made up of Internet applications that create online social structures that easily connect people all over the world. Some social networks might tell you how people know each other, allow for instant messaging or blog creation.

## Fast Facts

A blog (short for weblog) is an online publication or personal web-based diary, containing text, images and links.

## Are your kids on a social network?

If your children are posting information about themselves online, make sure they minimize their personal information exposure. When possible, do not post information like your full name, date of birth, home address, telephone number, social insurance number and anything that may be of interest to financial or sexual predators.

## Privacy settings

When your children sign up for a social network, have them read the terms of agreement and the privacy policy to ensure the proper use and storage of your information. Users, like your children, should be aware of the social networking site's default security settings. Some of these settings will allow anyone to see all of your personal information.

# 10 Steps to Safe Online Social Networking

Ten easy steps you and your children should read before using online social networks:

- 1) Do your research. Carefully investigate any online social network you may want to join. Use only well known online services.
- 2) Once you have picked a service, carefully read and clearly understand their 'Terms of Use'.
- 3) Carefully read and clearly understand the 'Privacy Policy'. Avoid using services that share your information with other companies.
- 4) Never expect absolute privacy! Create your account without providing any critical personal information, like: date of birth, full name, social insurance number or address.
- 5) Protect your account profile with the highest and most restrictive security setting.
- 6) Build your profile. For each element of information added, ask yourself, "Can a financial or sexual predator benefit from this information?"
- 7) You control your online environment. Do not give strangers permission to view your profile.
- 8) Protect your friends. Be careful what you are posting on the Internet about them.
- 9) Monitor your own page for personal information posted by friends in their messages. Also, monitor your friend's pages for your personal information. A simple comment or photo may reveal your date of birth or give information that could be useful to predators.
- 10) Be creative, be safe and have fun!

For more information on Interacting Online, visit <http://deal.org/the-knowzone/internet-safety/interacting-online/>

Internet Safety for your Children was resourced from Safety Canada.

