



CURRENT INTERNET FACTS

- "87% of U.S. teens ages 12 to 17 currently use the Internet, representing about 21 million youth. Of those, approximately 11 million teens go online on a daily basis." (*Pew Internet and American Life, "Teens and Technology," July 27, 2005.*)
- "The size of the wired teen population surges at the seventh grade mark. While about 60% of sixth graders use the Internet, by seventh grade the number jumps to 82%." (*Pew Internet and American Life, "Teens and Technology," July 27, 2005.*)
- 47% of children have received e-mails with links to pornographic websites. (*Symantec market research report, June 9, 2003*)
- Over half (51%) of parents either do not have, or do not know if they have, software on their computers to monitor where their teenagers go online and with whom they interact. (*Cox Communications and The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "Parents' Internet Monitoring Study," February 2005.*)
- 57% or more of parents were unable to correctly decipher the meanings of several common instant messaging abbreviations. (*Cox Communications and The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, "Parents' Internet Monitoring Study," February 2005.*)
- In late 2004, teachers at Montevideo Middle School in Virginia, surveyed 178 sixth grade students at their school. The resulting data was alarming: 1 in 4 had become friends with a stranger online and 1 in 10 had attempted to meet an online friend face to face. (*Montevideo Middle School, "Sixth Grade Computer Survey," December 9, 2004*)
- Some 57% of parents worry that strangers will contact their children online. These worries are well grounded. Close to 60% of teens have received an instant message or email from a stranger and 50% report emailing or instant messaging with someone they have not met before. Despite this, teens themselves are not particularly worried about strangers online; 52% of online teens say they do not worry at all about being contacted online and only 23% express any notable level of concern. (*Pew Internet & American Life, "Teenage Life Online," June 20, 2001*)
- 30% of teenage girls polled by the Girl Scout Research Institute said they had been sexually harassed in a chatroom. Only 7 %, however, told their mothers or fathers about the harassment, as they were worried that their parents would ban them from going online. (*Girl Scout Research Institute 2002*)
- 86 % of the girls polled said they could chat online without their parents' knowledge, 57% could read their parents e-mail, and 54% could conduct a cyber relationship. (*Girl Scout Research Institute 2002*)
- 81% of parents and 79% of teens state that teenagers aren't careful enough when giving out information about themselves online. 65% of parents and 64% of teens say that teenagers do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about. (*Pew Internet and American Life, "Protecting Teens Online," March 17, 2005.*)
- 27% of teens said that they have known a friend to actually meet someone whom they only knew online (*Teen Research Unlimited, "Topline Findings from Omnibuss Research," October 2005.*)
- Online teens admit that they frequently communicate with people they have never met: 54% have Instant Messaged a stranger, 50% have emailed a stranger, and 45% have participated in a chat room discussion with a stranger (*Teen Research Unlimited, "Topline Findings from Omnibuss Research," October 2005.*)
- 28% of teens said they use code words on a daily basis to hide their online conversations from their parents – example: "PIR" means "parent in room" (*Teen Research Unlimited, "Topline Findings from Omnibuss Research," October 2005.*)



TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Monitor your child's Internet use consistently. This is not a violation of your child's privacy; this is a safeguarding measure and part of your responsibility as a parent.
2. If your child belongs to a social networking site (MySpace, Facebook, Tagged, Xanga, etc), look closely at what information they have posted in their member profiles and blogs, including photos and videos. Predators, bullies, profanity, and threats often occur in these types of sites.
3. Find out what other websites your child's social networking site is linked to. Sometimes your child's web pages may be safe but they may be linked to a site which could endanger them (a pornographic site, a site in which a friend mentions your child's phone number, a site slandering school administrators).
4. Talk to your child about your Internet safety concerns in a positive way and give them the opportunity to make safety resolutions that you can both live with (example, how much time can be spent online? Are chat rooms permitted?).
5. Explain that your kids should: NEVER give out personal information (name, address, phone, school name), NEVER meet anyone from online without your permission, NEVER open emails from unknown senders, and NEVER share their photo with strangers over the Internet. Shared photos are an easy way for a predator to find a child or modify your child's image for pornographic use.
6. Encourage your children to bring anything strange or upsetting to your attention and don't overreact when they do (fear of losing Internet privileges is why kids don't tell parents about problems – and why they may start surfing the web somewhere else).
7. Stay in touch with your kid's online activities. Know who their online friends are (and who is on their buddy list), just as you would their other friends.
8. Learn how filtering and monitoring software can assist you in protecting your children (check with your Internet service provider to find out if filtering or monitoring is available for free with your provider). However, don't rely completely on software to protect your children. **Education and parental involvement are the primary methods of prevention.**
9. Internet accounts should always be in the parent's name. The parent should maintain the primary email account and be in charge of all passwords and parental controls. Kids should never share their passwords with anyone other than their parents.
10. Notify the police if someone your child met online starts calling them, sending gifts, or trying to lure them from home
11. Check your credit card statements each month for unusual charges that may indicate that a stranger or your child is making unauthorized purchases.
12. Don't think of the Internet as a babysitter. Kids on the Internet need adult supervision. Keep the computer in a public area of the house.



INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS

- **DO** spend more time with real life friends than virtual friends
- **DO** tell an adult if someone online harasses you or wants to talk about sex
- **DO** cut off contact with anyone who pressures you for your personal information (name, age, size, photo, address, family information)
- **DO** be careful of strangers who try to turn you against your family while promising to be your best friend (they may send you gifts and give you lots of compliments, but at the same time, they are possessive of your time and critical of your parents.)
- Do **NOT** exchange pictures with strangers through the Internet
- Do **NOT** open e-mails/instant messages or download attachments from people you don't know
- Do **NOT** fill out your information to win free stuff
- Do **NOT** go to meet someone you don't already know in real life



Internet Safety Plan

1. If I use a chat room or instant messaging, I will:

2. If I build a website about myself, I will:

3. If I use email, I will:

4. If I see something with sexual images online, I will:

5. If a person I meet online asks for my photo, I will:

6. If a person online starts a sexual conversation with me, I will:

7. If a person online offers to send me money or gifts, I will:

8. If a person online does something that frightens me, I will:

9. If a person I meet online asks to meet me in person, I will:

In order to protect myself, I agree to follow the above guidelines when using the Internet.

Student's signature: _____

Parent's signature: _____

HOW TO CHECK YOUR COMPUTER'S HISTORY

The history provides a list of the websites that have been viewed from your computer. For safety reasons, we recommend that parents review their computer's history to stay informed of the places their children visit online. (If the history is consistently empty, it is possible that either your child is deliberately erasing the history to keep you from finding out where they go online, or perhaps your computer is set up to automatically delete the history each time you exit out of the Internet. We advise that you disable the auto-delete feature).

To check your computer's history, follow these steps:

- ◆ Find the long narrow box (called a Navigation Bar) at the top of the screen where web addresses can be entered.
- ◆ To the right of this box, is a little drop down menu with an arrow. By clicking on the arrow, you can see a list of the different websites that have been viewed from your computer.
- ◆ AOL automatically saves the last 300 places visited.
- ◆ Internet Explorer can be customized to report a list of the places visited in the last 999 days.
- ◆ After you view all the entries in your computer's history, you can clear it.

ARE THERE OTHER WAYS TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT MY CHILDREN ARE DOING ONLINE?

Beyond checking your computer's history, you can also search your computer for any pictures that have been downloaded from emails or the Internet.

To look for downloaded photos or images, follow these steps:

- ◆ Click on your computers Start menu (look for the big word "start" at the bottom left of the screen).
- ◆ Click on Programs or All Programs.
- ◆ Click on Accessories.
- ◆ Now click on System Tools and finally click on Disk Clean Up.
- ◆ When you click on Disk Clean Up, a window will pop up to tell you whether there are any items stored in the category of Temporary Internet Files. If you click on Temporary Internet Files, and then select View Files lower down in the box, you will see a row of documents or folders. By clicking on these, you can quickly find out if any photos or images have been downloaded to your computer. To erase the contents of Temporary Internet Files, just go back to the Disk Clean Up window and click OK.

It is also a good idea to check the Recycle Bin on your computer to see if your offspring have discarded anything that you need to know about.

WEB WISE KIDS

"Equipping Today's Youth to Make Wise Choice Online"

P. O. Box 27203 • Santa Ana, CA 92799 • Tel (714) 435-2885 • Fax (714) 435-0523 • www.webwisekids.org