

INTERNET SAFETY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Internet is like having the world at your fingertips – shops, libraries, museums and a social scene. On the Internet, there are good places and parts that should be avoided or entered cautiously. Be safe. Whether you're instant messaging, blogging, social networking or just researching homework, learn to protect yourself.

When you surf the net, you risk:

- ✓ Viruses, spyware and other things hackers use to access your computer.
- ✓ Spam and junk mail with links to lure you to websites that can scam you.

Less common but more serious risks include:

- ✓ Getting harassed, bullied or threatened by someone online.
- ✓ Being in physical danger if a stalker, rapist or child molester finds you offline.
- ✓ Having your personal information stolen, putting you or your family at financial risk or worse.

By taking simple steps, you can protect your computer, your privacy and your safety.



Keep your passwords private.

- ✓ Never give out passwords to strangers or even friends.
- ✓ Don't share your password online, even if the request looks "official."

Protect your personal information.

- ✓ Never use your first or last name in your screen name. Create a screen name that reflects your hobbies or favorite music and doesn't reveal your gender or hometown.
- ✓ Never give out your name, address, phone number, email or other personal information. Don't give out your team or school name or anything that helps identify you offline.
- ✓ Be very careful in chat rooms and with instant messaging – even with people you know. Other people are likely lurking.

Beware of scams.

- ✓ Don't respond to official-looking emails asking for personal information.
- ✓ Watch out for "free" offers. These are often scams designed to get your personal information.
- ✓ Check with an adult before filling out any online form or survey that asks for personal information.
- ✓ Don't open an email attachment unless you are expecting it. Be careful about downloading programs or plug-ins from websites.



Don't trade pictures with people you don't know.

- ✓ You can never be sure people are really who they say they are.
- ✓ If someone asks to see a picture of you, tell them you don't have one.

Don't respond to messages that make you uncomfortable.

- ✓ These may include someone asking about your body or clothes, wanting to know where you live, making comments about sex, or sending threatening messages.
- ✓ If you receive messages that make you uncomfortable or scare you, tell a trusted adult right away. You can also file a complaint with the website ISP or cell phone company.

Teens: If your parents don't know how to use the Internet, help them learn how. Show them what you do when you are online. Your parents can help you stay safe.

Parents: Remember that in most cases, you can help your kids stay safe on the Internet and still respect their privacy. If you choose to use parental controls, talk with your kids about safety and how you are protecting them.



Don't get together with someone you've met on the Internet.

- ✓ People on the Internet can pretend to be someone they are not (for example, an adult can pretend to be a teen or kid). You can never be sure of a person's intentions.
- ✓ If you think a person is safe and you want to meet, talk to your parents or another trusted adult first! Don't take chances!

Be a responsible Internet user!

- ✓ Don't send mean or threatening text, email or instant messages. No one wants to receive upsetting messages.
- ✓ Be careful what you write, even if you think it is just between you and another person. Messages can easily be sent to other people on purpose or by mistake.
- ✓ If someone is doing something on the Internet that you don't like, don't respond. If it is dangerous or hurtful to them or another person, tell an adult.

Use the Internet wisely. And always remember to protect yourself.

