

## Keep Your Identity Private

### Personal Information and Images

Always remember that what you share or post online is not private. Parents, teachers, coaches, employers, admissions officers and others may go online and find things about you—from your profile or someone else's. Some people have even lost jobs, college admissions offers and scholarships because of information posted about them online.

When communicating online, avoid giving out your full name, your mailing address, your cell or home phone number, names of schools or employers, or any other information that may help someone determine your actual identity. The same goes for your family and friends. Never reveal anything about other people that may possibly put them in danger.

### Navigating a Connected World

Today, young people conduct much (if not most) of their social life in the virtual world, connecting through social networking sites and making many new "friends" with whom they chat and may share personal information and photos. Parents are often completely unaware of these social activities.

Kids go online almost anywhere. They may surf the Internet and send messages from computers at friends' homes, the library or school. They connect at coffee shops and other "hotspots" using laptops and wireless connections.

But kids don't need to enter a chatroom to chat via the Internet. Internet-enabled video game systems allow them to compete against and chat with players around the world. They also communicate with others on instant message (IM) sites and via Internet Relay Chat (IRC) networks, which enable computer-to-computer access. Cell phones enable them to surf the Web and exchange messages, photos and short videos from just about anywhere.

## Resources

### [www.preventcybercrime.org](http://www.preventcybercrime.org)

The St. Charles County Cyber Crime Unit offers information, resources and helpful links about cyber crime and Internet safety for parents and kids.

[www.myspace.com/stcharlescountycybercrime](http://www.myspace.com/stcharlescountycybercrime)

### [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

NetSmartz is an educational/informational site promoting Internet safety, sponsored by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

### [www.moicac.org](http://www.moicac.org)

The Missouri Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, as one of 59 such law enforcement Task Force Units funded by the U.S. Department of Justice in an effort to fight online child exploitation, offers information, helpful links and public service videos.

### [www.inobtr.org](http://www.inobtr.org)

INOBTTR is a nonprofit organization focused on Internet Safety education, with expertise in reaching adults and children through marketing, public relations, entertainment and events management.

### [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National White Collar Crime Center, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

How to Keep Your Family

# SAFE FROM CYBER CRIME

## Prevent Cyber Crime .org



The St. Charles County Cyber Crime Unit serves St. Charles, Lincoln, and Warren Counties, and all their municipalities. It is staffed by investigators from the St. Charles County Sheriff's Department and the Police Departments of O'Fallon, St. Peters, and Troy, Missouri.



# Statistics

## Children and the Internet

More than 30 million children in the United States have access to the internet. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 23% of preschool children

in the United States spend time on the Internet, 32% of kindergartners go online, and 80% or more of high school students use the Internet. These numbers continue to grow as the Internet becomes ever more accessible.

## Risky Behavior

The Saint Charles County Cyber Crime Unit takes special interest in

reaching out to kids and their parents to warn them of possible dangers prowling the Internet. A national Internet poll of teens ages 13 to 18 showed that 54% frequently communicated online with someone they had never met in person, while 27% said they had talked online about sex with someone they never met. In addition, 33% discussed meeting someone whom they had only met through the Internet and 42% said they posted personal information that would enable someone to find them. Nearly one in eight of the teens polled discovered that an online "friend" was an adult pretending to be much younger. In another survey, 4% of all youth Internet users received aggressive sexual solicitations in which these solicitors asked to meet in person, called them on the telephone, or sent offline mail, money or gifts.



# Risks

## Cyber Bullying / Cyber Harassment

Cyber bullying is when one or more adolescents slander, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or otherwise target another adolescent using digital technologies. When an adult is involved, it becomes cyber harassment.

Cyber bullying and harassment can have serious consequences. Victims have assaulted their tormenters in anger or even committed suicide.

## Online Predators

Online predators attempt to exploit vulnerable Internet users for sexual or financial purposes. Minors are particularly at risk for sexual solicitation. Children do not always know who their online "friends" really are. Predatory adults may pretend to be children online, tricking kids into revealing personal information or even luring them into physical encounters.

## Other Risks

Once your personal information or pictures are out there, you can't take them back. Even if you remove them from your website or social network page, others may already have copied them. Anyone you share with can share with others. You will never know who is reading about you or sharing your pictures. Your personal information also may be used for identity theft.

Children using the Internet may be exposed to inappropriate, lewd or violent messages and images. These may be readily accessible in the form of games, music lyrics, social networking pages and videos that glamorize gang activity, violence, sexuality or drugs.

# Internet Safety Tips

Used responsibly, the Internet is an incredible resource for adults and kids alike. Keep it safe with these helpful tips:



## Be Safe

Use secure wireless and beware of online scams and phishing (fraudulent e-mails designed to solicit personal information like credit card numbers and passwords). Never open unsolicited e-mail attachments.

## Add a layer of protection

to your MySpace page by making the St. Charles County Cyber Crime Unit your "number one friend." Once the Cyber Crime Unit is added to the Top Friends List on your MySpace page, your page displays the Cyber Crime Unit logo, which may act as a visual deterrent to predators. Parents also can discuss with their children adding the Cyber Crime Unit to their "Friends List" as a condition of having a MySpace page. [www.myspace.com/stcharlescountycybercrime](http://www.myspace.com/stcharlescountycybercrime)

Monitor your child's Internet use and discuss Internet safety with your family. Consider limiting children's Internet access to a computer located in a family room or another open area of your home. Internet accounts should be in the parent's name with parents having the primary screen name, controlling passwords, and using blocking and/or filtering devices.

Let children show you what they can do online, and visit their favorite sites. Have children use child-friendly search engines when completing homework. Limit chatroom access to child-friendly chat sites. Know who children are exchanging e-mail with, and only let them use chat areas when you can supervise.

## Report Suspicious Activity

Inform your Internet service provider. Also report it to school authorities if the incident took place at school or involved other students from your school.

**Fraud:** Contact your local law enforcement agency or file a report via the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

**Child exploitation:** Call **1-800-THE-LOST** or visit the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children online at [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).