

When Social Got Personal

A Guide to Social Networking



*A comprehensive list of
social networking, blogging
and other influential social websites*



The School Resource Officer Consortium of Indiana

A Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative sponsored by
The United States Attorney's Office for the
Northern District of Indiana



This collection of open source information is offered for informational purposes only. The intended use of this guide is to introduce the reader to a few of the leading social networking platforms on the Internet. While there are hundreds of other social networking sites that are not featured in this guide, many of the most popular have been included. The information provided is not intended to incriminate a particular website for any reason, but to make the reader aware of the realities that may exist. Points of view or opinions are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Indiana.

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Myspace, Facebook, Xanga, Blogs. Social networks are a growing global phenomenon that every teenager wants to be a part of. Children used to write in diaries to record their deepest thoughts and memories, now they use blogs to convey those messages to thousands. Today's youth are part of a global social network with the emergence of the Internet, and that network continues to grow exponentially, often unbeknownst to adults.

“Did you get invited on Facebook to that party?” “I can't believe she put that pic up on Xanga.”
“I'm gonna be on Second Life later if u wanna meet up.”

Huh? You're not alone. The intended use of this guide is to inform parents, law enforcement, educators and the community about a few of the leading social networking providers on the world wide web, and the cautions that are associated.

Just remember that social networking sites reflect the communities we all come from. For all the good neighbors we have, there are also the bad. Gang members, identity thieves, bullies and pedophiles have access to these sites, and we hear the stories created by them. Social networking sites have profoundly influenced computer-savvy youth. Educate yourself and keep those preying on impressionable youth from doing the same.

As part of our community outreach efforts at the U.S. Attorney's Office, our goal is to educate the citizens we serve on the dangers that compromise our communities. Project Safe Childhood (PSC) aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. The threat of sexual predators soliciting children for physical sexual contact is well-known and serious; the danger of the production, distribution, and possession of child pornography is equally dramatic and disturbing. The response to these growing problems must be coordinated, comprehensive, and robust. It must aim to investigate and prosecute vigorously, and protect and assist victimized children. At the same time, it must recognize the need for a broad, community-based effort to protect our children.



PSC has been integrated as a part of the Northern District of Indiana's School Resource Officer Consortium program. The S.R.O. Consortium, lead by the U.S. Attorney's Office, is a network of participating School Resource Police Officers throughout the state of Indiana.

Project Safe Childhood will help ongoing efforts to raise awareness and to equip parents and children with the tools and information they need to become responsible Internet users, so that they can explore this limitless frontier for the opportunities of the American dream.



Social Networking

A social networking site is a website where individuals can set up an online profile, describing his/her interests, and add links to other profiles. Generally, users are able to post personal information, including photographs, videos, and blog entries. One social networking site, MySpace, is extremely popular both with individuals and with music groups, who can post their songs on their profile pages and advertise their tour dates. Many bands will attempt to solicit as many "friends" as possible on social networking sites, so that more people will be aware of their music.

Social networking sites are popular with people all over the world, particularly teenagers and people in their twenties. Because social networking is so popular with teenagers, some people are concerned that teenagers and kids who post personal information on social networking sites are at risk of being solicited by pedophiles. As a result, some social networking sites have taken precautions to monitor the information provided by underage patrons; however, there is no way to enforce proof of age or identity, so this issue is currently unresolved.

Social networking sites can be a great way to stay in touch with a large group of people. If you have news you'd like to share with everyone you know, you can simply post it on your own personal bulletin board, and it will be distributed to everyone on your friends list. Social networking sites can also be helpful for connecting with new people, whether on a business, friendship, or a romantic level.

On some social networking sites, such as Friendster, you can only make a connection with someone who is already linked to people that you have claimed as friends. On others, it is possible to contact anyone you like. However, some people claim to make their profiles on social networking sites private, and available only to people they select as their friends. This can be a wise decision, particularly if you have information available on a social networking site that you would not want the general public, such as a family member or an employer, to see. ^[1]

Most social network services are primarily web based and provide a collection of various ways for users to interact, such as chat, messaging, email, video, voice chat, file sharing, blogging, discussion groups, and so on.

Typical structure of a social networking service

In general, social networking services, such as MySpace, Facebook and Bebo, allow users to create a profile for themselves. Users can upload a picture of themselves and can often be "friends" with other users. In most social networking services, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice's friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a "favorites" feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networks usually have privacy controls that allows the user to choose who can view their profile or contact them, etc.

Privacy issues

On large social networking services, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these services need to be aware of data theft or viruses. However, large services, such as MySpace, often work with law

enforcement to try to prevent such incidents.

In addition, there is a perceived privacy threat in relation to placing too much personal information in the hands of large corporations or governmental bodies, allowing a profile to be produced on an individual's behavior on which decisions, detrimental to an individual, may be taken.

Furthermore, there is an issue over the control of data - information having been altered or removed by the user may in fact be retained and/or passed to 3rd parties. This danger was highlighted when the social networking site Quechup harvested e-mail addresses from user's e-mail accounts for use in a spamming operation.

Investigations

Social network services are increasingly being used in legal and criminal investigations. Information posted on sites such as MySpace and Facebook, has been used by police and university officials to prosecute users of said sites. In some situations, content posted on MySpace has been used in court to determine an appropriate sentence based on a defendant's attitude.

Facebook is increasingly being used by school administrations and law enforcement agencies as a source of evidence against student users. The site, the number one online destination for college students, allows users to create profile pages with personal details. These pages can be viewed by other registered users from the same school which often include resident assistants and campus police who have signed-up for the service. ^[2]



The Leading Social Networking Websites

Myspace

+ 200,000,000 Registered Members



MySpace is a free online community composed of personal profiles aimed for mostly at a younger membership. A MySpace profile typically includes a digital photo and in-depth information about personal interests. The amount of detail included in the profile is up to the user and submitted voluntarily. MySpace policy requires users be at least 14 years of age to join. Members routinely send each other messages and “network” or socialize within the MySpace community.

The format of MySpace makes it easy for anyone to submit profile information, even if they have little online experience. Though the domain has proved incredibly popular, reportedly hosting over 200 million profiles, it has also come under fire. The concern is that the vast majority of MySpace members may be too inexperienced to realize the potential danger of posting personal information online. Some profiles contain not only a picture, but also the user's first and last name, location, and details like favorite music and foods. This information enables a predator to easily target and befriend a victim.

MySpace members might also choose to fill out “the survey.” The survey asks such questions as whether the member has ever had sex, skinny-dipped, smoked, drunk alcohol, or taken drugs. Members that post to MySpace expect their profiles to be read by kids their own age, explaining the often suggestive answers and leading innuendo typical of teenage bravado. Many parents would likely agree this information does not belong in a public profile. Provocative or not, MySpace

profiles provide a "protected" hunting ground where potential predators can choose, stalk and befriend victims, sight unseen. Bolstered by a plethora of personal information, the predator can easily manipulate the potential victim into a false sense of security and familiarity while misrepresenting himself entirely through his own false profile. Though forbidden by MySpace, false profiles are all but impossible to prevent within the framework.

In some cases, MySpace members come forward when solicited. For example, in February 2006, CBS reported that a 14-year-old girl was approached for sex through MySpace by Robert Wise, a 38-year-old man. Wise was subsequently arrested when police assumed the girl's identity while Wise, unknowingly, continued to ask for sex.

Other MySpace members haven't been so lucky. Several reports from around the US have linked MySpace to children who were either murdered or went missing. Just before 14-year-old Judy Cajuste of New Jersey was murdered in January 2006, the girl apparently told friends she'd met a man in his twenties through MySpace. Similarly, 15-year-old Kayla Reed of Northern California was reportedly an active member of MySpace until the day she disappeared on 2 December 2005. Her body was found seven weeks later, the victim of murder.^[3]

While MySpace has taken steps to improve safeguards, many users put themselves at risk by revealing personal information such as name or location, or worse, by agreeing to meet strangers. Parents can take an active role in protecting their children by ensuring they follow some simple rules:

Choose a fake name that will only be used on MySpace and nowhere else. A real name can be traced to an address and phone number, and frequently used nicknames are also often traceable. Choose a new name that will be exclusive to MySpace.

Get a free webmail address for the MySpace nickname, and use this address for MySpace only. A webmail address does not track back to your personal location, unlike your Internet Service Provider (ISP) email address. Have your child enter false information to get the webmail address so that it is not cross-referenced to his or her real name. Use this webmail address only for MySpace. Using the email address elsewhere will increase potential for triangulation between databases, which can reveal true identity or location.

Instruct your child not to share clues to his or her location. It is easier than imagined for a predator with a picture to sit outside a school and watch the children come and go, scanning the crowd for a particular face. If a MySpace profile or blog contains references by name to schools, malls, or movie theaters when your teen spends time, a fake name will be a mere inconvenience to a determined predator.

Teach children how to post or blog about experiences without revealing *which* school, mall or theater she or he is posting about. Once a teen understands that names are incidental anyway, it should not hamper the enjoyment of using MySpace to share experiences. For example, a teen can post about "the math teacher" rather than "Mr. Simon."

A teen should never post where she or he is going to be. For obvious reasons, this is a bad idea. Children should also avoid revealing parents' schedules or vacations.

People aren't always who they say they are. Anyone can create a fake profile with a picture of someone else. Predators excel at manipulation and charm, and often pose as other teens. Impress upon your children that no matter how much they might like strangers they meet online, they should not extend them personal information or stray into inappropriate areas of conversation.

Do not agree to meet friends only known from MySpace. It may seem harmless to meet "16-year-old Beth" – but "Beth" may not be a 16-year-old girl at all. The key to safely enjoying MySpace is to enjoy it without having to venture real-life trust.

Encourage your children to tell you if an online "friend" is pushing for personal information or urging to meet. Even a nice person might be curious and ask a few nosy questions or put forth a friendly invitation to meet. However, once your teen kindly explains that she or he does not share personal information online and does not meet online friends, the behavior should stop.

Other options are to refrain from posting a profile picture and to keep the MySpace profile private. However, these suggestions may not go over well with teens. Profiles without pictures may be seen as sub par, while "private profiles" - accessible by invitation only - are mandatory for children under 16, which can make the feature undesirable to older teens. Some teens may also choose to have several MySpace accounts. For example, a teen may have one profile they let their parents know about, then a separate private account for their friends and others to communicate on.

Common sense precautions can drastically reduce potential risks associated with using MySpace. Some parents may choose to review their child's MySpace profile routinely. Parents can also remove an existing profile by visiting MySpace.com. This may be necessary if the current profile needs to be replaced with a safer profile using a new username and email address. ^[4]

Orkut

+ 68,000,000 Registered Members



Orkut is an Internet social network service run by Google and named after its creator, Google employee Orkut Büyükkökten. It claims to be designed to help users meet new friends and maintain existing relationships. Similar to Facebook, Friendster and MySpace, Orkut goes a step further by permitting the creation of easy-to-set-up simple forums (called "communities") of users.

Orkut has a list of features unique to itself like "Scrapbook", "Communities" etc., apart from normal features such as messaging and photo albums.

A user first creates his or her "Profile", in which he/she mentions his/her "Social", "Professional" and "Personal" details, with the option of choosing which group ("Friends", "Friend's friends", "everyone") of people would be allowed to view the particulars. A user can also upload his/her photo as the photo of his profile. If necessary, a user can completely remove his profile photo if they wish.

Scraping, though the word is not accepted officially in english, is popular among the Orkut community as a kind of offline chatting. Users can scrap on another member's scrap book, even if that member is offline. The scrap recipient will be able to see it when he or she visits their

scrapbook. Contrary to personal messaging or email, scrap book entries are public, meaning that any one with an orkut account can read others' scraps. Users can reply to a scrap from their scrapbook itself by replying to a scrap. Scraps can also be in HTML, enabling users to post photos, videos, audio files and other embedded objects directly into others' scrapbook.

Another unique feature of orkut is "Communities". Anyone with an orkut account can create a community on anything. One can post topics, inform users about an event, ask them questions or just play games. There are more than a million communities on Orkut with topics ranging from pizza to pasta or from film star to superstar. The first five communities on Orkut were started within 24 hrs of launch of orkut. Users can upload photos into their Orkut profile with a caption. Users can also add videos to their profile from either YouTube or Google Videos with the additional option of creating either restricted or un-restricted polls for polling a community of users.

In addition to this, there is a personal messaging feature which is rarely used by members. It is mainly used by community owners to ask others to join their community. One issue of this feature is that it lacks confidentiality, owing to the reason that if you know the exact link of the message then you can read such messages.

Users have options to rate their friends in the order of "Best Friends", "Good Friends", "Friends", "Acquaintances" and "Haven't met". Further, each member can become fans of any of the friends in their list and can also evaluate whether their friend is "Trustworthy", "Cool", "Sexy" on a scale of 1 to 3 (marked by icons) and is aggregated in terms of a percentage. Unlike Facebook where a member can view profile details of people only on their network, Orkut allows anyone to visit anyone's profile, unless a potential visitor is on your "Ignore List". Importantly, each member can also customize their profile preferences and can restrict information that appear on their profile from their friends and/or others (not on the friends list). The highlight feature is where any member can add any other member on Orkut to his/her "Crush List" and both of them will be informed only when both parties have added each other to their "Crush List".

Hate groups

There has recently been controversy revolving around the use of Orkut by various hate groups. Virulent racists allegedly have a solid following there. Several hate communities focused on racism, Nazism and white supremacy have been deleted due to guideline violation. However the number of these communities and profiles has not stopped growing because they can be very easily created and it is hard for Orkut to check them.

In 2005, various cases of racism were denounced to police and reported in the Brazilian media. In 2006, a judicial measure was opened by the Brazil federal justice denouncing a 20-year-old student accused of racism against those of African ancestry and spreading defamatory content on Orkut. Brazilian Federal Justice subpoenaed Google on March 2006 to explain the crimes that had occurred in Orkut.

Anti-religion, anti-national, and anti-ethnic hate groups have also been spotted. Recently an Indian court has issued notices to Google on some of the groups. The Mumbai Police too is seeking a ban on Orkut post objections raised by political groups. Groups denigrating various political leaders and celebrities have also emerged. ^[5]

Hi5

+ 50,000,000 Registered Members



In hi5, users create an online profile in order to show information such as interests, age and hometown and upload user pictures where users can post comments. hi5 also allows the user to create personal photo albums and set up a music player in the profile. Users can also send friend requests via e-mail to other users. When a person receives a friend request, he or she may accept or decline it, or block the user altogether. If the user accepts another user as a friend, the two will be connected directly or in the 1st degree. The user will then appear on the person's friend list and vice-versa. Some users opt to make their profiles available for everyone on hi5 to view. Other users exercise the option to make their profile viewable only to those people who are in their network. The network of friends consists of a user's direct friends (1st degree), the friends of those direct friends (2nd degree) and the friends of the friends of direct friends (3rd degree).^[6]

Friendster

+ 50,000,000 Registered Members



The Friendster Web site launched in 2003, offering users a place to link up with existing friends, friends of friends, their friends, and so on down the line. The site was billed as a place to make dates, find activity partners, open up business opportunities or whatever other purpose users chose. The concept quickly made Friendster a hip Web destination, and the company now boasts more than 50 million worldwide subscribers.

Friendster is based on the Circle of Friends (social network) and Web of Friends techniques for networking individuals in virtual communities and demonstrates the small world phenomenon.

Friendster was considered the top online social network service until around April 2004 when it was overtaken by MySpace in terms of page views, according to Nielsen Online. Friendster has also received competition from all-in-one sites such as Windows Live Spaces, Yahoo! 360, and Facebook. Of late, newer websites like hi5 are posing new competition for friendster.^[7]

Facebook

+ 39,000,000 Registered Members



Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet. The site also features a wall for others to write comments, a marketplace for members to advertise, events such as parties or gatherings and videos.

All that's needed to join Facebook is a valid email address. To connect with coworkers or classmates, use your school or work email address to register. Once you register, join a regional network to connect with the people in your area. Facebook is made up of many networks, each based around a company, region, or school. Join the networks that reflect your real-life communities to learn more about the people who work, live, or study around you.^[8]

The information students provide on Facebook has been used in investigations by colleges, universities, and local police. Facebook's Terms of Use specify that "the website is available for your personal, noncommercial use only", misleading some to believe that college administrators

and police may not use the site for conducting investigations. However, there are settings on Facebook that allow a user to make his/her profile private (only people the user approves may see his/her profile).

Alcohol policy violations

There have been incidents where colleges and universities use Facebook to investigate underage drinking and violations of dry campus policies or discover them while investigating other incidents. For example, several Residence Community Advisors at Northern Kentucky University lost their jobs when pictures were discovered of them having casual drinks in a residence hall one night towards the end of semester. Many high schools have also begun to use Facebook to crack down on underage drinking and other illegal activities.

In response to the monitoring, some students have begun to submit "red herring" party listings. In one case at The George Washington University, shown at CakeParty.org, students advertised their party and were raided by campus police. The police found only cake, no alcohol, and later claimed the break up had been triggered by a noise complaint.

Other investigations

- There have been several incidents where candidates in student government elections used Facebook for campaigning in a way that was not permitted by their campaign policies.
- At the University of Mississippi, a group of students were brought before the University's Judicial Board in April 2005 and forced to remove a Facebook group that professed their love for a professor in a sexually suggestive manner.
- One Miami University student was arrested after he set a composite sketch of a rape suspect as his profile picture.
- Others have been punished for rushing the football field at Penn State (Many "I rushed the field" groups were created after the Nittany Lion football team defeated Ohio State in October 2005, and State College Police and Pennsylvania State Police used the groups to arrest those who they believed rushed the field in violation of school policy).
- A Duquesne University student was punished for hate speech against homosexuals.
- Four Syracuse University students were reprimanded for harassing an instructor in a Facebook group and were threatened with expulsion, though the final result was academic probation. On the other hand, University of Louisville students who had created a Facebook group to complain about a professor's teaching shortcomings helped lead to the dismissal of their targeted instructor in February 2006, and the students were not punished.
- In February 2007, following the hit-and-run death of freshman Carlee Wines, University of Connecticut campus police used Facebook to link the suspected driver, Anthony P. Alvino of Lindenhurst, N.Y., to the university. By following leads via Facebook, police learned of the connection between Alvino and his girlfriend, Michele A. Hall, a UConn student. Alvino was charged for the hit-and-run, while Hall was charged with helping cover it up and hindering prosecution.
- In April 2007, just days after the Virginia Tech shooting, a student at the SUNY College at Cobleskill was remanded into psychiatric care and suspended from college after posting a photo of himself on his profile with a vaguely threatening message underneath. This story became even more controversial as it grew across the news.

- It has been reported that staff at the University of Oxford have been looking at students' Facebook pages in investigating poor behaviour. Staff have been searching through photos in an effort to root out poor conduct from students celebrating their exam results and graduation. The Oxford University Student Union has urged students to restrict access to 'friends only' in an effort to protect privacy.
- In July 2007 the University of Kent issued a strongly worded statement protesting that a group of students had created a hate page about a library employee, which the site quickly removed.
- In November 2006, two students were expelled from the University of Texas fraternity Pi Kappa Alpha based on racist images posted on Facebook. ^[9]

Bebo

+ 34,000,000 Registered Members



Bebo is a social networking website, designed to allow friends to communicate in various ways. It has developed into an online community where users can post pictures, write blogs and send messages to one another, and is similar in format to MySpace, Xanga, and Yahoo! 360. The site was founded in January 2005 by husband and wife team Michael and Xochi Birch. It was given a major relaunch in July of that year.^[2] Bebo can be used in most countries around the world including Ireland, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

Once a user has registered an account, they edit and maintain their own profile page using online forms. The top of a user's profile contains information about the user, which would typically include their name, a customizable profile image (often a photo of the user), and some miscellaneous information under various headings. The profiles are decorated with 'skins', default skins are available but users are able to create their own to reflect their interests.

Profiles include; a *whiteboard*, in which other users can draw pictures with a variety of colors using a system called ffArt, a comment section where other users can leave a message, and a list of the user's friends. These are all publicly viewable, unless the user selects the "Private Profile" option, which limits access to the profile to friends specifically added by the user.

Profiles are also capable of including quizzes, slide-shows of images uploaded by the user, polls for their friends to vote in, photo albums, blogs with a comments section for others' responses, a list of bands of which the profile-holder is a "groupie" and a "Flash Box"; which plays video, often linked from popular Internet site YouTube, or uploaded directly to Bebo's servers. Members can also add "widgets" which are more graphically rich components provided by an external site — typically something like a slide-show of the member's photos with some transition effect applied.

Members can view the recent changes friends have made to their homepage from the 'Home' menu. These changes can include uploaded photos, updated flashboxes and newly added videos and friends.

A map feature enables members to see who has been viewing their profile. However, the viewer must be logged in while viewing and have their profile set to public in the map section, in order for this to be possible.

Concerns

A survey of two million profiles by Bigulo.com found that one in three publicly accessible profiles belonged to children under the age of eighteen.

In March 2007 in Derry, Northern Ireland, Bebo was used to organize a sectarian fight under the guise of a cross community football match. Bebo has also been used to name and abuse local police officers in Tayside, Scotland.

Police in the United Kingdom have claimed that several social networking websites are being used by young people to organise fights and even mass brawls. However, they have singled out Bebo in particular as a cause for concern. UK law enforces claim to have arrested children as young as fourteen in connection with these incidents and that the use of weapons is not uncommon.^[10]

BlackPlanet

+ 16,000,000 Registered Members



Launched in 1999, Blackplanet.com is an online niche social-networking site targeted especially for the African American community. It is currently the 5th highest trafficked social-networking site according to Hitwise, and the only niche social-networking site in the top 5, behind the likes of MySpace and Facebook. Blackplanet is the leader in the African American social-networking arena.^[11]

BlackPlanet.com functions as a social networking outlet, advertising as a means to make social, romantic and professional connections between its members.

MiGente

+ 3,600,000 Registered Members



Launched in 2000, MiGente.com is an online niche social-networking site targeted especially for the Latino community. It is currently is the fastest growing English language site for the Hispanic community and has captured that much sought-after second generation immigrant who is using English as his/her primary language.^[12]

MiGente.com functions as a social networking outlet, advertising as a means to make social, romantic and professional connections between its members.

Concerns

Jeffrey Carr, vice president of marketing for Community Connect, which runs blackplanet.com and migente.com, said he is aware that some gangs and gang members use these sites. According to the 2005 National Gang Threat Assessment by the National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations, gang members are increasingly computer savvy. "Web sites often include photos of members, tattoos and gang hand signs," reads the report. "Sites may also have bulletin boards, message boards or chat rooms where members can post messages or 'shout outs' to identify cliques or chapters of the gangs in various cities."

The Web pages can be found on free sites such as myspace.com, blackplanet.com, which is targeted at black users, and migente.com, aimed at English-speaking Hispanics. Of the three, the gang pages are most prevalent on migente.com, which began in 2000 and is Spanish for "my people."^[13]

MeetUp

+ 2,000,000 Registered Members



Meetup.com is an online social networking portal that facilitates offline group meetings in various localities around the world. Meetup allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest, such as politics, books, games, movies, health, pets, careers or hobbies. Users enter their ZIP code (or their city outside the United States) and the topic they want to meet about, and the website helps them arrange a place and time to meet.^[14]

MyYearBook

+ 1,700,000 Registered Members



MyYearbook is a free Internet social network service similar to Friendster, Facebook, and MySpace. According to Nielsen NetRatings, MyYearbook was one of the top ranked destination sites for teens ages 12 to 17 in September 2006.^[15] MyYearbook.com allows users to create a profile with separate sections for high school, college, graduate school and professional life. Students who sign up are automatically linked to others at their school. Users also can vote for the biggest flirt, best athlete, and most popular students at the school.

The profile of pages on MyYearbook can contain things like age, location, mood, interests and others. In addition to the profile features, users can also customize their profile to a pre-made theme or create their own using the generator, as well as add a music playlist with audio files from the digital locker.

The most popular feature on MyYearbook is "battling," in which a user picks an item, such as a sports team or television show, to pit against another user's item. Friends then vote on which item is better, and the winner receives fake "lunch money" that can be used on the site to buy virtual presents for friends.^[16]

The Oswego, New York Police Department has concluded its investigation of a reported Rape that occurred in the City of Oswego on Friday, September 28th, 2007 at about 10:15 pm. The investigation revealed that a male from the State of Tennessee allegedly had sexual relations with a 14-year-old female after having met on Myyearbook.com, an Internet site. Due to the nature of the investigation the Oswego City Police Department contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation-Syracuse Office relative to possible federal charges.^[17]

Pizco



Pizco is an online photo website builder and community, where people can sign up for free to make their own advertising-supported websites. Piczo was launched in 2004. Its key focus is user-user interaction. It is particularly popular with teens, though many adults are using it too. Using plain text and HTML,

signed-in users can add images, text content, guestbooks, message boxes, videos, glitters, shout-outs, personal pages, profile pages, and more to their site.

Piczo is becoming increasingly popular in youth culture and Internet culture and saw 10.2 million unique visitors worldwide in August 2006. Among ages thirteen to fifteen, the web researcher Nielsen/NetRatings illustrates that Piczo was the fastest-growing online brand in the UK in 2006 with girls and boys under 18 accounting for almost half its audience. ^[18]

The system is designed for teenagers, thirteen to sixteen years old. To keep these young people safe from online stalkers and predators, the network is completely closed. It is virtually impossible to browse user pages on Piczo. There is no search or browse feature. So the social groups tend to remain somewhat walled off from the rest of the world. Users must share their page URL with others for it to be found, and there are numerous ways for users, parents and others to report inappropriate behavior. ^[19]

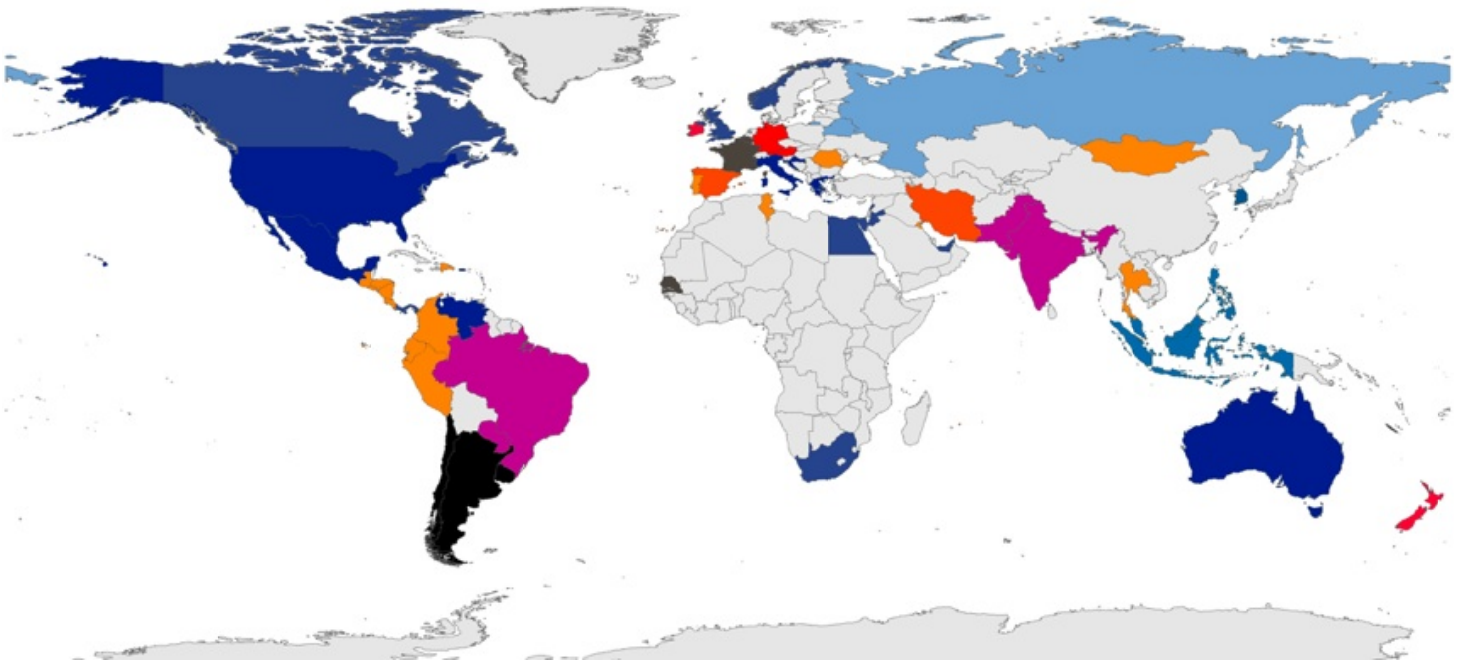
Tagged



Tagged.com is social networking Web site specializing in connecting its users with friends old and new. The site allows its users to send messages, leave comments, browse photos, watch videos, play games, give tags and chat. It just replicates MySpace or Bebo, but is comparatively simple. ^[20]

Top Social Networking Sites per Country

Below is a map of the most popular social networking sites in countries around the world. *Courtesy of Valleywag.com.*





Blogs & Journals

A blog (short for weblog) is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs are defined by their format: a series of entries posted to a single page in reverse-chronological order. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or reflect the purpose of the Web site that hosts the blog. Topics sometimes include brief philosophical musings, commentary on Internet and other social issues, and links to other sites the author favors, especially those that support a point being made on a post. ^[21]

A blog is a personal diary. A daily pulpit. A collaborative space. A political soapbox. A breaking-news outlet. A collection of links. Your own private thoughts. Memos to the world. Your blog is whatever you want it to be. There are millions of them, in all shapes and sizes, and there are no real rules. In simple terms, a blog is a web site, where you write stuff on an ongoing basis. New stuff shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. Then they comment on it or link to it or email you.

A blog gives you your own voice on the web. It's a place to collect and share things that you find interesting, whether it's your political commentary, a personal diary, or links to web sites you want to remember. Many people use a blog just to organize their own thoughts, while others command influential, worldwide audiences of thousands. Professional and amateur journalists use blogs to publish breaking news, while personal journalers reveal inner thoughts. ^[22]

About 20 percent of U.S. Internet users between the ages of 12 and 17 have a blog -- about four million U.S. teenagers, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, a Washington-based nonprofit that researches the impact of the Internet. Many are confiding their feelings and intimate details of their lives -- and sometimes posting revealing photographs -- to the personal Web sites offered by free services such as MySpace, Xanga, LiveJournal and Multiply. ^[23]

Concerns

Cyber-Bullying. Cyber-Bullying is defined as threats or other offensive behavior sent online to a victim or sent or posted online about the victim for others to see. This has become a troublesome phenomenon in the blog world. Readers of blogs sometimes use vulgar language; racial, homophobic or sexist epithets, or even threats of violence in comment threads.

Even bloggers may use their blogs as venues for such harassment directed at others. Some blogs are cyber reality shows, widely read diaries that publicly detail the social drama and fluctuating emotions of young lives. They are often scoured for personal mention, and they spare no language or feelings. Other forms that blog cyber-bullying can take are the creation of fake blogs in the name of a victim which purport to be by the victim but which ridicule him or her. Such sites may use vulgarity, pornography and other forms of inflammatory discourse in an attempt to shame the victim. ^[24]



The Leading Blogging Websites

Xanga

+ 40,000,000 Registered Members



Xanga is a free Web-based service that hosts weblogs, photoblogs, videoblogs, audioblogs, and social networking profiles.

Each site is officially called a "Xanga Site," commonly referred to as a "Xanga". The Xanga users themselves are often referred to as "Xangans." The sites are used largely by teenagers. Users are allowed to post any number of weblog entries per day, and may also customize how their Xanga looks using pre-made templates or custom HTML. Xanga sites are most commonly used as personal journals. ^[25]

Xanga is one of the world's biggest blogging platforms, with around 40 million users. The New York-based company launched in 1999 with a service that allowed users to share book and movie reviews. Since then, it has morphed into a full-blown blogging platform, but the reviews feature is still a big part of the community.

Xanga's blogging tools are pretty straightforward - there's a rich text editor with fonts, formatting, a color palette and a spellchecker, as well as the option to make your posts public or private. Premium users can also post via email. What's more, you can make money from your blog: using a feature called Xangazon, Xanga lets you insert items into your blog entries based on what you're currently playing, reading and watching (ie. CDs, books and DVDs). These items are linked to Amazon, and you can insert your Amazon Associates ID to earn affiliate commissions when your readers buy those items. ^[26]

Like most social sites, Xanga provides a profile page for each user. Your profile page can include your favorite movies, TV shows, destinations, books, music, food and video games, as well as the schools and colleges you attended.

Concerns

School officials across the nation are growing more concerned over the issue of free speech when it comes to blogging and their students. Many students have been disciplined or even expelled for blogs that contain rants about teachers, administrators or even other students. As more and more students begin using blogging posts, the issue will undoubtedly grow. Students are now being advised to leave their intimate thoughts and vendettas off the web, as it may affect not only their safety, but also their academic and professional lives.

LiveJournal

+ 12,900,000 Registered Members



LIVEJOURNAL

LiveJournal is a virtual community where Internet users can keep a blog, journal, or diary. LiveJournal's differences from other blogging sites include its WELL-like features of a self-contained community and some social networking features similar to, but pre-dating, Friendster and MySpace. Each user also has a "User Info" page, which contains a variety of data including contact information, a biography, images (linked from off-site sources), and lists of friends, interests, communities, and even schools which the user has attended in the past or is currently attending. ^[27]

Blogger.com



Blogger hosts and publishes blogs for free. You can create your own blog, or explore a new or notable blog. It also offers image hosting, blog updates from your mobile phone, and making blog posts from Microsoft Word. Blogger Profiles let you find people and blogs that share your interests. Your Blogger Profile, where you can list your blogs, your interests, and more, lets people find you (but only if you want to be found).

Blogger also allows you to share a photo. There's a button for uploading photos in the Blogger interface. Just click the photo button to upload a photo from your computer. If the photo you'd like to put on your blog is already on the web that's fine too. You can also send camera phone photos straight to your blog while you're on-the-go with Blogger Mobile. Blogger Mobile lets you send photos and text straight to your blog while you're on-the-go. All you need to do is send a message to go@blogger.com from your phone. You don't even need a Blogger account. The message itself is enough to create a brand new blog and post whatever photo and text you've sent. ^[28]



Image/Video Sharing

Flickr



Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application. Its primary goals are to help people make photos available to those who matter to them, and to enable new ways of organizing pictures. You can join Flickr for free and begin sharing images immediately. Pro accounts are available for those who want to add and display high volumes of photos. ^[29] In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. Its popularity has been fueled by its innovative online community tools that allow photos to be tagged and browsed by folksonomic means. ^[30]

Fotolog



Fotolog, Inc., the world's oldest and largest photo-blogging community and the third most actively-used social network on the Internet, has become a global cultural phenomenon. Twelve million member accounts from more than 200 countries have shared more than 300 million photos since its inception in October 2002. Fotolog provides a platform for members to share experiences and connect with others across the globe by bringing together the power of digital photography, social networking and blogging to attract and entertain in a unique and captive user experience. ^[31]

YouTube



YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips. Unregistered users can watch most videos on the site, while registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. Some videos are available only to users of age 18 or older (e.g. videos containing potentially offensive content). ^[32]

YouTube is one of the most well-known video services on the Internet, and more recently the battleground for copyright and intellectual property protection. YouTube lets anyone share videos online. It uses Flash and a simple video player that starts playing videos right away. While the quality isn't that great, it's become incredibly popular for the sheer amount of content that's made its way onto the site from its massive group of users.

YouTube has paved the way for a variety of other services and evolved its own services with new features such as user profiles, video rankings, and a system that lets anyone reply to a video either with text or a video. Most recently it's become a hotspot for presidential candidates who are giving YouTube community members the chance to tell them what they want for America.^[33]

Concerns

Violent homemade videos have become trendy on Youtube. In a Valparaiso, Indiana parking lot, they meet. Stare each other in the eye. Their postures are angry and full of ego. The tension thickens. Suddenly one man grabs the other, slams his head into his nose, and kicks him in the groin. Fists fly. Bodies tumble. The brawl slams against cars and skirts along the pavement. Bone smashes into flesh, again and again, as the young men try to pummel each other into submission. There are 50, maybe 100 people, maybe more, watching on the sidelines, hooting, hollering, cursing, laughing. But thanks to YouTube, this fight has been seen by thousands.

It's part of a trend called "happy slapping." Young people, often teens, get together to fight, commit crimes, and videotape the happening. What's filmed goes online for the world to see. The fight in the parking lot has been seen more than 7,000 times since it was first broadcast. Type "Valparaiso, Indiana" in the search engine on YouTube, and it's the first video that comes up. Parents, school officials, the staff at YouTube, even the French government are trying to crack down on such display. But it's difficult controlling a medium run by the masses.

The Valparaiso fight isn't the only one from Northwest Indiana, or even the city itself, that's ended up online. Valparaiso High School Principal Patrick Weil said school officials found out about a YouTube/MySpace video that showed students bare knuckle boxing in a back yard, seemingly inspired by Ultimate Fighting Championship, about two months ago. Weil said the school has no control over students' off-campus activities. But two fights happened at the school that were seemingly connected to the fighting in the video.^[34]



Webcam/Live Images

Stickam

+ 600,000 Registered Members



Stickam is a social networking website that features user-submitted pictures, audio, video, and most prominently, live webcam chat, a unique feature. Operating on a live streaming video platform, members can leave their computer webcams on while they talk to friends, surf the internet, or even get up and dance if so inclined to. Anyone can tune into a user's video feed, unless the user restricts it to friends only. The site shows who's online live, and who's webcam you can view. You do not have to have a webcam or even a membership to view others with the service. And although it may be interesting to see members from across the globe, it could very well be a pedophile tuning into a teen's bedroom webcam that would concern parents and family members.

Concerns

Parents and child safety experts concerned about the online activities of teenagers have been particularly nervous about Stickam, which allows its 600,000 registered users, age 14 and older, to participate in unfiltered live video chats using their Web cameras. But those Internet safety advocates might be even more anxious if they knew of Stickam's close ties to a large online pornography business.

On its Web site and in press reports, Stickam says that it is owned by Advanced Video Communications, or AVC, a three-year-old Los Angeles company that sells video conferencing and e-commerce services to businesses in Japan and other Asian countries.

But according to Alex Becker, a former vice president at Stickam, and internal company documents, Advanced Video Communications is managed and owned by Wataru Takahashi, a Japanese businessman who also owns and operates DTI Services, a vast network of Web sites offering live sex shows over Web cameras. Mr. Becker alleges that Stickam shares office space, employees and computer systems with the pornographic Web sites.

Though Stickam remains relatively small compared to Web giants like [MySpace](#) and YouTube, several thousand of its mostly teenage members log onto the site each night to broadcast their own lives, often from their bedrooms. They put on makeshift talk shows, flirt with other members in video chat rooms, and often, if they are female, field repeated requests to take off their clothes. ^[35]



Virtual Reality

Second Life



Second Life is a three-dimensional virtual community created entirely by its membership. Members assume an identity and take up residence in Second Life, creating a customized avatar or personage to represent themselves. The avatar moves about in the virtual world using mouse control and intuitive keyboard buttons.

Second Life's virtual world also includes sound; wind in the swaying trees, babbling brooks, audible conversation, and built-in chat and instant messaging. Residents buy property, start businesses, game with other residents, create objects, join clubs, attend classes, or just hang out. The rendering of Second Life is remarkable, making it an instant guilty pleasure.

As of fall 2006, over 3,000 residents reportedly make an excess of 20 thousand US Dollars per year running businesses in Second Life. Most of them sell objects they've created that other residents want. One Second Life resident landed a *Business Week* cover story for earning a three-figure income – that's real-world dollars – selling virtual real estate.

Property purchased in Second Life is owned by the buyer using a scheme referred to as Internet Protocol (IP) copyright. When a resident builds a business or hangout that attracts other residents – i.e. generates traffic – he or she is rewarded with *Linden dollars*, Second Life's currency. Linden dollars can also be purchased with real dollars using a credit card. Part of the exchange rate goes to Linden Inc., with Second Life purportedly generating over 64 million USD a year.

Real world corporations are also taking interest in the virtual world. In September 2006, *Popular Science* reported that Wells Fargo Bank bought an island on Second Life, where they may one day offer real world banking. Wal-Mart and Intel are just two of the mega-giants considering corporate training classes in Second Life – a business model that could save corporations, big and small, millions of dollars in travel and lodging fees. Future possibilities include virtual universities that replicate their real-life counterparts with classrooms and professors teaching interactive classes in real time, virtual interactive congressional sessions, and three-dimensional customer and tech support.

Anyone over 13 years of age can open a free account at Second Life, though members between 13 and 18 participate in *Teen Second Life*, a separate virtual community. Within the adult version of Second Life, there are PG areas and adult areas where different modes of behavior are acceptable. According to the terms of service contract, harassment of any kind in Second Life results in permanent expulsion.^[36]

Investigations

An ongoing investigation by the FBI into gambling in Second Life is believed to be directly related to Linden Lab's sudden decision to ban all forms of gambling on Second Life. The FBI investigation commenced in April 2007 and was considering the legality of online gambling within the virtual world. The US Government prohibits most forms of online gambling.^[37]

Red Light Center

Red Light Center (RLC) is a privately owned Massively Multi-User Reality site that was made available to the public early in 2006 by Uthervers, Inc. Its tag line is "Live Your Fantasy". With over 300,000 users (and growing at a rate of 1,500 new users each day), Redlightcenter.com has become one of Second Life's biggest competitors.

Red Light Center is modeled after Amsterdam's Red Light District. The online community site offers users virtual nightclubs, hotels, bars, movie theaters and stores. There is a virtual currency called Rays which members can earn and use for services in the community.

Red Light Center offers Community Events, such as parties, classes, meeting rooms, live music with dancing and art-gallery openings. These events are broadcast within the online universe. Users also have the ability to put on their own events to real audiences within the various Redlight Center theaters.

As an adult playground, RLC features a sex function. The users are represented by avatars which may be customized personally to suit a user's tastes, and may be used to have sex with another. Certain areas of RLC provide a bed for the users and cater to various popular fantasies. Users have access to underwater caves, locker rooms, a hotel, and bordello rooms which are all private spots. There are several themed and equipped rooms available for BDSM play. The avatars are all anatomically correct and the sexual activity is detailed and animated. Users chose a position or action from a menu and then watch it happen with their avatar partner. Since both partners have the same menu to choose from, the result is a visual cybersex.^[38]



Social Classifieds

Craigslist



Craigslist is a mostly free Web site of classified ads allowing people to search for everything from jobs and apartments to a place to find local piano lessons. It is searchable by state, city and often areas, including Northwest Indiana.^[39] Craigslist is a centralized network of online communities, featuring free classified advertisements (with jobs, internships, housing, personals, for sale/barter/wanted, services, community, gigs, resume, and pets categories) and forums on various topics.^[40] Started in San Francisco in 1995, craigslist is perhaps the ultimate site for classified listings. The website is built around communities, and craigslist now offers sites in 450 cities and countries throughout the world.^[41]

Investigations

In October 2007 Lake Station, Indiana police arrested a 31-year-old woman after they said they witnessed her offer sex for money in an undercover sting set through the Internet site Craigslist. Largely unknown by local law enforcement, Craigslist has helped the region take the world's oldest profession cyber. Among the options offered through Craigslist is its erotic services section, with a disclaimer that the user perusing the section is at least 18 years old. The section is home to several posts offering a bevy of sexual services and apparent prices for those services. The posts often are accompanied with nude and sexually explicit photos, as well as phone numbers or e-mail addresses.^[39]

Also in October 2007, police in Minnesota say an online ad may have cost a young woman her life. They said Katherine Olson was last seen by friends when she went to meet someone about a nanny job posted on Craigslist.org, the Internet bulletin board. A day later, her body was found in her car at a Minnesota nature preserve. Police declined to say how the 24-year-old was killed. Authorities said a 19-year-old man who they believe placed the ad is being held pending charges. Authorities did not release his name but said charges could be filed soon.^[42]

Internet Safety

The Internet can be a wonderful resource for kids. They can use it to research school reports, communicate with teachers and other kids, and play interactive games. Any child who is old enough to punch in a few letters on the keyboard can literally access the world.

But that access can also pose hazards to your children. For example, your 8-year-old might log on to a search engine and type in the word "Lego." But with just one missed keystroke, he or she might enter the word "Legs" instead, and be directed to thousands of websites with a focus on legs - some of which may contain pornographic material.

That's why it's important to be aware of what your children see and hear on the Internet, who they meet, and what they share about themselves online.

Just like any safety issue, it's a good idea to talk with your kids about your concerns, take advantage of resources to protect them from potential dangers, and keep a close eye on their activities.

Internet Safety Laws

A federal law has been created to help protect your kids while they are using the Internet. It is designed to keep anyone from obtaining your kids' personal information without you knowing about it and agreeing to it first.

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) [15 U.S.C.A. § 6502] requires websites to explain their privacy policies on the site and get parents' consent before collecting or using a child's personal information, such as a name, address, phone number, or social security number. The law also prohibits a site from requiring a child to provide more personal information than necessary to play a game or contest.

But even with this law, your child's best online protection is you. By talking to your child about potential online dangers and monitoring his or her computer use, you'll be helping your child to surf the Internet safely.

Online Tools to Protect Your Child

There are online tools that you can use to control your child's access to adult material and help protect your child from Internet predators. No option is going to guarantee that your child will be kept away from 100% of the risks on the Internet. So it's important that you be aware of your child's computer activity and educate your child about the online risks.

Many Internet service providers (ISPs) provide parent-control options to block certain material from coming in to your child's computer. There is also software that can help block your child's access to certain sites based on a "bad site" list that your ISP creates. Filtering programs can block sites from coming in and restrict your child's personal information from being sent online. You can also find programs to monitor and track your child's online activity. Also, it's a good idea to create a screen name for your child to protect his or her real identity.

Getting Involved in Your Child's Online Activities

Aside from these tools, it's a good idea to take an active role in protecting your child from Internet predators and sexually explicit materials that are online. Here are some steps that can help you do that:

- Become computer literate and learn how to block objectionable material.
- Keep the computer in a common area, not in individual bedrooms, where you can watch and monitor your child.
- Share an email account with your child so you can monitor messages.
- Bookmark your child's favorite sites for easy access.
- Spend time online together to teach your child appropriate online behavior.
- Forbid your child from entering private chat rooms; block them with safety features provided by your Internet service provider or with special filtering software. Be aware that posting messages to chat rooms reveals your child's email address to others.
- Monitor your credit card and phone bills for unfamiliar account charges.
- Find out what, if any, online protection is offered by your child's school, after-school center, friends' homes, or any place where he or she could use a computer without your supervision.

- Take your child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.
- Forward copies of obscene or threatening messages you or your child receives to your Internet service provider.
- Call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at (800) 843-5678 if you are aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography online. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the FBI if your child has received child pornography via the Internet.

Many sites use "cookies," devices that track specific information about the user, such as name, email address, and shopping preferences. Cookies can be disabled. Ask your Internet service provider for more information.

It's also a good idea to set up some simple rules for your kids to follow while they're using the Internet. These rules may include:

- Follow the rules you set, as well as those set by your Internet service provider.
- Never trade personal photographs in the mail or scanned photographs over the Internet.
- Never reveal personal information, such as address, phone number, or school name or location. Use only a screen name. Never agree to meet anyone from a chat room in person.
- Never respond to a threatening email or message.
- Always tell a parent about any communication or conversation that was scary.
- If your child has a new "friend," insist on being "introduced" online to that friend.

Chat Room Caution

A chat room is a virtual online room where a chat session takes place. Chat rooms are set up according to interest or subject, such as skiing or a favorite TV show. Because people can communicate to each other alone or in a group, chat rooms are among the most popular destinations on the Web - especially for kids and teens.

But there are hazards to chat rooms for kids. There have been incidents where kids met "friends" who were interested in exploiting them through chat rooms. No one knows how common chat-room predators are, but pedophiles (adults who are sexually interested in children) are known to frequent chat rooms.

These predators sometimes prod their online acquaintances to exchange personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers, thus putting the kids they are chatting with - and their families - at risk.

Many pedophiles pose as teenagers in chat rooms. Because many kids have been told by parents not to give out their home phone numbers, pedophiles may encourage kids to call them; with caller id, the offenders instantly have the kids' phone numbers.

Warning Signs That Your Child May Be a Victim

There are warning signs that your child is being targeted by an online predator. Your child may be spending long hours online, especially at night. If there are phone calls from people you don't know or unsolicited gifts arriving in the mail, it's a good idea to ask your child about any Internet contacts. If your child suddenly turns off the computer when you walk into the room, ask why and

monitor computer time more closely. Withdrawal from family life and reluctance to discuss online activities are other signs that you need to look more closely at what your child is doing online.

Contact your local law enforcement agency or the FBI if your child has received child pornography via the Internet or if your child has been the victim of a computer sex offender.

By taking an active role in your child's Internet activities, you'll be ensuring that he or she can benefit from the wealth of valuable information the Internet has to offer, without being exposed to any potential dangers. ^[43]

Tips for Parents

- Keep the computer in a room other than the child's bedroom, so you can monitor what your child is doing, and for how long.
- Set up an agreement and guidelines with your child about the use of the computer, including appropriate schedules and durations.
- Understand the services that your child uses online. If you do not understand them, have your child teach you about them.
- Investigate blocking and screening services offered by your ISP or by other web sites or software providers.
- Spend time online with your child so that you can set a good example for online behavior.
- Never respond to threatening or offensive messages, and encourage your child to do the same.
- Encourage your child never to give out any personal information.
- When discussing your child's day, be sure and ask about time spent online.
- Remind your children never to meet anyone they have met online without your permission and without your presence.
- Make sure to learn about everyone your child meets online, and discuss these relationships with your child.

Tips for Children

- Do not give out personal information such as address, telephone number, parents' work address or work telephone number, or the name and location of your school without your parents' permission.
- If you ever encounter something online that you don't understand or that makes you uncomfortable, tell a parent or teacher right away.
- Never get together with someone you met online without getting your parents' permission first. If a meeting is decided, be sure that it is in a public place and that you bring one or both parents along.
- Do not send any picture of yourself to anyone without getting your parents' permission first.
- Do not respond to any messages that make you feel uncomfortable. It is not your fault if you get a message like that, and it is okay to tell your parents no matter what it is.
- Follow the rules that your parents set for computer and Internet use. Always make sure it is okay to go online before you do so.
- Remember that people may not always be who they say they are.

Internet Safety Resources and Websites

CyberTipline

www.cybertipline.com



The Congressionally mandated CyberTipline is a reporting mechanism for cases of child sexual exploitation including child pornography, online enticement of children for sex acts, molestation of children outside the family, sex tourism of children, child victims of prostitution, and unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. Reports may be made 24-hours per day, 7 days per week online at www.cybertipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678.

Please contact us if you have information to help in the fight against child sexual exploitation. Your information will be forwarded to law enforcement for investigation and review and, when possible, to the appropriate Electronic Service Provider(s).

Internet Crime Complaint Center

www.ic3.gov

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C). IC3's mission is to serve as a vehicle to receive, develop, and refer criminal complaints regarding the rapidly expanding arena of cyber crime. The IC3 gives the victims of cyber crime a convenient and easy-to-use reporting mechanism that alerts authorities of suspected criminal or civil violations. For law enforcement and regulatory agencies at the federal, state, local and international level, IC3 provides a central referral mechanism for complaints involving Internet related crimes.



Help Delete Online Predators

www.missingkids.com/adCouncil



In 2004 the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children partnered with the Ad Council to develop an advertising campaign that alerts families about online child exploitation. By using this site, families can learn how to better protect their children's online lives.

Netsmartz

www.netsmartz.org

The NetSmartz Workshop is an interactive, educational safety resource that teaches kids and teens how to stay safer on the Internet. NetSmartz combines the newest technologies available and the most current information to create high-impact educational activities that are well received by even the most tech-savvy kids. Parents, guardians, educators, and law enforcement also have access to additional resources for learning and teaching about the dangers children may face online. NetSmartz was created by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).



Don't Believe the Type

tcs.cybertipline.com/index.htm

Teens learn to better protect themselves from online sexual predators. Includes information on identifying the dangers, situations to avoid and safe surfing. Sponsored by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

A blue rectangular box with the text "DON'T BELIEVE THE TYPE" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

Think Before You Post

tcs.cybertipline.com/knowthedangers8.htm

A blue rectangular box with the text "THINK! BEFORE YOU POST" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

Learn how posting images and personal information can put you at risk. Webcams, microphones, and digital cameras allow you to post videos, photos, and audio files online and engage in video conversations. Webcam sessions and photos can be easily captured, and users can continue to circulate those images

online. In some cases people believed they were interacting with trusted friends but later found their images were distributed to others or posted on web sites.

2 SMRT 4U

www.2SMRT4U.com

The goal of the 2 SMRT 4U campaign is to teach teens to navigate the Internet responsibly. At the center of the campaign is the 2 SMRT 4U ring, which serves as a tangible reminder to "Type Smart. Post Wisely." The campaign is in support of the U.S. Attorney General's initiative, Project Safe Childhood, which was designed to help protect children from online exploitation.



2SMRT4U.com includes online safety tips, fun downloads, real-life stories adapted from NCMEC cases, and a link to report incidences of online enticement. Plus you can order a ring for yourself and a friend.

StaySafe.Org

www.staysafe.org



Provides information on online safety and security for teenagers, parents, educators, and adults. Also provides an 'ask the expert' area. Learn how to protect your family

from online predators, bullies and inappropriate content.

Comprehensive List of Online Lingo

Do you know what LOL, A/S/L or BF stands for? How about MSG, 143 or PAW? Educate yourself or test your family's knowledge of shorthand commonly used in Instant Messenger, chatrooms and cell phones.



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