

SAFETY IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

The internet is so handy to make purchases, keep in touch with friends, find information and conduct business. Along with the good comes the bad. These are simple reminders and suggestions to protect financial, emotional, physical and mental health.

- ✓ Each year select a day and pull a free credit report on yourself at: www.AnnualCreditReport.com, www.Equifax.com, www.Experian.com, or www.TransUnion.com.
- ✓ Do not use the same password for multiple internet sites.
- ✓ Use passwords with a capital letter, numbers, and/or symbol.
- ✓ Change passwords every six months- especially on critical sites like banking, credit cards or PayPal.
- ✓ Never respond to emails asking for personal information- businesses will always ask you to go to their website to give more information.
- ✓ **https://** means the website is **secure** for personal data. It will also frequently have a picture of a padlock or special symbol.
- ✓ On social networking sites: Limit the amount of information on the profile page. Your friends and family will already have your contact information so never include home phone, address, or email. Hackers target specific scams at you from information posted on these and other sites.
- ✓ Games through Facebook such as Farmville access your personal information and can send it to businesses increasing spam emails.
- ✓ Internet security programs like McAfee and Norton (for a fee) can help identify and remove malicious software like viruses that can be spread through Facebook, email, and websites.
- ✓ Be aware that deleted text messages, photos, and emails may still be accessed in cyberspace. Library of Congress is archiving Tweets.

Information Already on the Internet About You

Go to www.pipl.com or www.PeekYou.com and perform a deep internet search. You might be amazed at what you find in cyberspace about you or your children.

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A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety

U.S. Department of Justice: FBI

"There are individuals who attempt to sexually exploit children through the use of attention, affection, kindness, and even gifts. These individuals are often willing to devote considerable amounts of time, money, and energy in this process. They listen to and empathize with the problems of children. They are aware of the latest music, hobbies, and interests of children. These individuals attempt to gradually lower children's inhibitions by slowly introducing sexual context and content into their conversations."



Signs Your Child Might Be At Risk On-Line:

- ❖ Your child (grandchild) spends large amounts of time on-line, especially at night.
- ❖ You find pornography on your child's computer.
- ❖ Your child receives phone calls from men you don't know or are making calls, possibly long distance, to numbers you don't know.
- ❖ Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.
- ❖ Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen when you come into the room.
- ❖ Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.
- ❖ Your child is using an on-line account belonging to someone else.

Reduce the Chances of Your Child Being a Victim

- Communicate and talk to your child about on-line dangers and reasons why you have concerns.
- Spend time with your children on-line, learn about their favorite sites. Maintain access to your child's accounts and randomly check their email.
- Keep the computer in a common room in the house.
- Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software.
- Do not allow webcams in a child's bedroom.

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