

Online Predator FAQ



**Discover Answers to Important Questions All
Parents Should Ask About Online Predators and
Children**

Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2007

All Rights Reserved

e-booksonline.ca

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or passed on in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as allowed under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher and Author.

Terms and Conditions

The information contained in this guide is for information purposes only, and may not apply to your situation. The author, publisher, distributor and provider provide no warranty about the content or accuracy of content enclosed. Information about dating is subjective. Keep this in mind when reviewing this guide.

Neither the Publisher nor Author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages resulting from use of this guide. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.

Frequently Asked Questions

Every parent wants to do what is best for their child. When it comes to online predators, the list of questions parents have is endless. This special report will cover some of the more commonly asked questions parents have about online predators. It will reveal many simple and easy ways parents can protect their children, and find out whether their children may be at risk for online predation.

Take advantage of this special report to sharpen your knowledge about your child's activities and the danger online predators present.

Q. What are public forums and how do they put my child at risk?

A. Public forums are places where children and adults alike can visit to write messages and post questions to members of a community. There are many free online forums people use to communicate with. Often online predators hang around these sites looking to find their next victim. What are examples of some places your child or teenager may go to post information? Here are just a few examples:

- **Blogger.com** – this site allows users to create a free blog. A blog is like an online diary. Your child can post their profile and any information they want on a blog. If your child has a blog, you should know about it, and know what kind of information they are posting. Many teenagers use blogs to “freely” express their opinions. Blogs are also a gateway for online predators to learn more about your child's habits, beliefs, needs and interests. Another popular blog site, one that takes a bit more skill to use, is Wordpress.com.

- **Myspace.com** – this is a popular social network on the Web that is supposed to be for people 13 years old and older. People of all different backgrounds and ages post their profiles on this site. This can be a great place to meet people, but also another Internet “hideout” for online predators. Just be sure if your child posts to sites like this, they are old enough and they do not provide information that may lead to a predator taking advantage of them. Things they should avoid? Posting their full name, address, phone number, private email address etc. While this may seem restrictive, often it is in your child’s best interests. If you know your child has a space, check it out on occasion.
- **Livejournal.com** – this is another online journal or blogging site that people can use to post information or daily journal entries about their life. Remember, predators will search these sites and look for entries by young people that are isolated, alone or disturbed. They may also simply prey on the young and innocent.
- **Freeopendiary.com** – yet another online diary site. If you go to any online search engine and type in “online diary” or “blogging” you will find a list of about 100 or more free sites your child may have access to on the Web. If you need to, set up rules and block sites you do not want your child to participate in.

So what is the best way to approach your child about creating a site? Let them know it is great to explore their identity and meet with others. Insist however they follow certain guidelines. Do not let a 9 year old post a profile on Myspace.com. Establish boundaries. Make sure your children are aware of the risks of putting personal information on the Web.

Let your child know that once they put information on the Web, it stays there permanently. There are archive sites that collect information about sites, so even if your child deletes a site or posting, somewhere there may be an archive of the site someone can look up to find out more information about your child.

Ask your child if they really want to put their information out there for the world to see. If they do, make sure you monitor their actions and make sure they do so safely.

Make sure you DO take time to find out what your child is posting. You may be surprised to learn how vocal young adolescents can be. Take action to protect your children.

Q. What is filtering software and how can I use it to protect my family?

A. There are many types of filtering software available on the Web today. Many email products provided by Microsoft come automatically with spam filters that block certain messages, including those containing language that is sexually explicit. Often you can log in and change the settings to prevent potential spam from coming through your email address.

Other software allows you to block the sites your child has access to, or limits the time your child spends “surfing” the Net. This is a good choice for parents that may be away a lot of the time their child may be home and using the Net.

Many libraries buy filtering software to prevent pornographic or adult content from being accessed by users.

Q. Can I monitor my child when away from home?

A. Yes! There are some filtering programs that allow parents remote access, so they can check up on their children and see what types of programs they might download or sites they access when parents are away. Remote monitoring means you can watch out for your children while on vacation or while at work. One product that has this capability is CyberSieve. Visit <http://www.softforyou.com> for more information.

Software like this will keep track of websites your child visits. It also allows you to set up controls, prohibiting access to adult themed sites. How do you do this? Many times you simply enter keywords you do not want your children to access, like “sex” or “dating” and other terms your teen or adolescent may search for when you are away.

Software can also keep track of any blog sites like the ones mentioned previous your child may create and allows you to monitor and record live chat sessions, so you know who your child talks to and when. If you believe your child may be at risk, this may be a wise investment to protect your child’s safety and wellness.

Q. I don’t want to completely limit my child’s access to instant messaging. It is very popular among teenagers. How can I protect my child from potential predators?

A. You can allow your child access to IM without increasing their risk of danger exponentially. The first step is monitoring your child’s activity and educating them about the risks of sharing personal information live over the Web. Make sure if your child sets up a profile you make note of what interests they list, because predators will often look at children’s interests to

find ways to communicate with them or get close to them. Encourage your child to input as little information as needed to communicate.

Let your child know that people often set up phony or false identifications, so even if they look up someone's profile, the information available may not be accurate. A 50 year old male may present himself as a 14 year old girl for example.

You can also use applications or configure your messaging systems to protect your child from unwanted or unsolicited IM when they are online. Many IM tools for example, allow people to log on in what is called "invisible" mode. This allows your child to chat with others without exposing them to unwanted predators. While they are logged on, to others it looks like they are offline. Make sure you also have a powerful antivirus system installed in your computer. One of the simplest ways for a worm or other virus to enter your computer is through an IM tool.

Q. What types of controls can I implement on our home computer to protect my child?

A. There are many ways you can protect your child. The simplest and most cost-effective way is to have a house computer everyone can use in a single, open location. You should set up a communal or family email address that everyone logs into, so you can keep track of messages sent to your children. Once your children are a little older, this may be more problematic as they beg for their privacy.

You can still protect your children by setting up controls on your computer. Many of these controls allow you to block adult content or spam from entering your child's mailbox. You can restrict the sites and chat rooms you allow your child to visit. When your child is working online, make sure you

work close by so you can keep an eye on how long they chat or surf, and what types of sites they frequent.

There are many sites your children can enjoy for entertainment, communication or learning on the Web, without the risk of exposing them to unnecessary danger. Take the time to learn what controls you should put in place, establish family rules and use applications like parental controls software when needed to ensure your child's safety.

Q. When should I allow my child access to the computer? Is there a right age?

A. These days, predators seek out children as young as 4. There are computer programs that target children as young as 3 and 4. Most of these are educational in nature, but they expose your child to the Net. If you do allow your child to explore the Net at a tender age, make sure you sit with them the entire time so you can monitor what they do and where they visit.

You will also see if any harmful information is placed in front of your child, so you can decide what filters you may need to put in place.

Most children become more active on the computer once they reach school age. When your children are in grade school, up until about 8, it is fine to encourage them to explore educational sites on the Web. This is not a time when they need access to IM, personal email or other tools that may expose them to unnecessary dangers.

Once your children hit the "tweens" or pre-teens and teenage years, they will begin exploring the Internet more actively. Now may be the time to ensure you have ground rules in place for Internet use. You can also install software that restricts your child from accessing unauthorized sites, and provides

protection and filtering from adult content or spam. By using this software, you can rest more easily knowing your child can use the Net safely, and assert some independence, without placing them at unnecessary risk.

Children 13 and older often log onto the Net to study or to complete assignments for school. Others seek out new games they can download to their computer. They may want to chat with their friends. This is the time to sit down with your children and make sure they understand they should not give out their personal information, even to people “introduced” to them by friends online. Make a point to know who your children talk to, and meet them in person if you can. Make sure you are open to your child about sexual questions they may have. If they don’t bring up the topic, then you SHOULD, because children at this age are naturally curious about sex.

The easiest way for them to find information is on the Web. It is also the least reliable and most dangerous. If you fear your child may be surfing sites for sex, and then install an Internet filter.

Don’t be so strict you prevent your child from downloading some games and having a little fun on the Web. Remember, the key is balancing controls with certain small freedoms so your children don’t feel you are suppressing their “creative” integrity. You are still in control however, of their actions.

As your children continue to get older and enter high school, let them know their use of the Net is a privilege, one they can keep if they abide by your rules. As with anything you can take it away if your child abuses it, if for no other reason than it puts them at risk.

Q. What are some good rules to establish with older children or teens about using the Internet without seeming too restrictive?

A. Ultimately you and you alone are responsible for setting boundaries with your children. You should set some standard guidelines however, including the following:

1. Let your children know it is not ok to give out their personal information, including their address or phone number, or yours, over the Web. If they need to for school, make sure they get your permission first.
2. Do not let your child buy things on the Web without your supervision. Internet thieves can collect and steal your child's and your identity from an innocent child trying to buy a game from a site like eBay.
3. Make sure you prevent your children from posting personal photographs on the Web. This may prove difficult, as many children want to express their freedom as they get older. You may have to work with older teenagers to establish limits to what they can and shouldn't post on the Web.
4. Encourage your child to talk with you openly if they are approached by someone on the Web in a manner that disturbs them. Talk to your child ahead of time about what type of material you consider normal and ok and what type of content may be dangerous.
5. Establish an agreement where you insist your children meet any other children they "meet" online with your approval first. If your child plans to visit a new friend somewhere, go with them. Make sure you attend and make sure your child meets in a public location where there are lots of eyes and ears around.

6. Remind your children to keep their passwords private. Inform them of the dangers of identity theft, and let them know that thieves can take identities from anyone, even babies. This will encourage them to keep their personal information private. Educate them about common scams or phishing scams on the Web, where people solicit personal information including social security numbers or credit card information on the Web. Ask your children to ask for your permission before giving out any information like this to anyone on the Web.
7. Make sure when instant messaging your child logs on in invisible mode, so they are less likely to be approached by strangers that may invite them into a private or dangerous chat room.
8. Find out why your child has an interest in the Web. If their reasons are benign, trust your child, but keep an eye on them. Many children exposed to explicit material on the Web accidentally become hooked and targets of online predators.
9. Don't forget to talk to your children about the various kinds of crimes that can occur online. Identity theft is an example. Don't just think of Internet predators in terms of pedophiles or people out to take advantage of your child sexually. Many predators are just looking to steal your money or your identity.
10. Let your child know you trust them. Your child wants to know you trust them and wants to know they can come to you if they have problems. If you establish a loving bond, your child is more likely to approach you about unusual or questionable actions that happen on the Web.

The Internet can be a fun and entertaining place for children and adults alike. By taking a few precautions and taking care of your children, you help defend them from unwanted attacks from online predators.

If you would like more information please visit [Online Predators](#).