

# Safe Surfing 101



An Internet Guide for Kids and their Parents

## Internet "DO's"

- ◆ Use a nickname online.
- ◆ Pick a password that's easy to remember but hard to guess.
- ◆ Use common sense and best judgment when online.
- ◆ Check with your parents before downloading anything to your computer.
- ◆ Be a 'good citizen' online. Never say anything that is mean or hurtful, even as a joke.
- ◆ If someone sends you something that makes you uncomfortable, or if someone presses you for personal information, let your parents or teachers know. Do not respond to it.
- ◆ Always check first with your parents before entering a chat room. People aren't always who they say they are.
- ◆ Always check first before meeting someone in person that you have met on the Internet. Meet in a public place and bring a trusted adult.
- ◆ Talk to your parents about what you are doing online and who you are speaking to.
- ◆ Check with your parents before signing up for anything online.
- ◆ Always trust your instincts or 'uncomfortable' feelings.



## Tips for Adults

- ◆ Make online experience a family activity. Set up computer(s) in a central area of the home, like the living room or family room.
- ◆ Sign an internet safety contract as a family.
- ◆ Limit the amount of time your child spends online.
- ◆ Monitor their computer activity. Talk to kids about what they are doing. Get them to show you regularly.
- ◆ Use history features to keep track of websites visited.
- ◆ Become familiar with the internet. Learn the language and the basics.
- ◆ Consider filters. A variety of content filtering programs are available.
- ◆ Ensure that you are protected against viruses, hackers and spyware.
- ◆ Direct your kids to children's online services. Check them first to make sure they are appropriate.
- ◆ Steer young children away from chat rooms and instead encourage telephone communication.
- ◆ Always trust your instincts.

## Steps to be Taken

Parents must take an active role in protecting their children. Parents need to be:



Available

Devoting time to the issue

Computer literate

Informed about Internet hazards

Motivated to take action



***Make responsible internet habits part of your family's safety plan.***

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## Internet "DON'T's"

- ◆ Never give out personal information online. **Personal information includes:**
  - Your real name, or names of members of your family
  - Your address (full or part)
  - The name or address of your school
  - Your phone number
  - The name of teams you play on or extra curricular activities you attend
  - The name of your pet
  - Your parents' work address, work phone or credit card numbers
- ◆ Do not enter contests without parental permission.
- ◆ Do not click on links or emails from someone you don't know. They could lead to inappropriate websites.
- ◆ Do not respond to junk mail.
- ◆ Never send your picture (or anything else) over the internet without parental permission.
- ◆ Don't give your internet password to anyone.
- ◆ Don't send rude or insulting messages to anyone online. This is called flaming and is not good 'Netiquette'.
- ◆ Don't believe everything you read on the Internet. Always check the source of the information and confirm it.
- ◆ Don't store credit card numbers or banking passwords on the computer. This will help to ensure that there are no 'accidental' transactions or purchases.
- ◆ Do not eat or drink on the computer. A spill can cause damage to the machine.

## What Kids are Doing Online

Games  
School projects and research  
Information searching  
Emailing friends  
Chat lines  
Instant Messaging



## Other Internet Measures

Time limits  
Rules about chat and email  
Have your child teach you about the computer  
Old fashioned parenting techniques  
Learn about your child's interests



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# Safe Surfing 101

## Young Canadians in A Wired World - Facts and Findings

- ◆ 99% of youth have reported using the Internet
- ◆ 79% of children between the ages of 9 and 17 have Internet access at home
- ◆ 1 in 4 children have had a stranger ask to meet them in person
- ◆ 15% of all young Internet users have met in person at least 1 individual whom they first met on the Internet - of those only 6% were accompanied by a parent or other adult
  
- ◆ 58% of 11-12 year olds indicate that they go into chat rooms - of those 37% visit private and adult-only chat rooms
- ◆ 70% of 13-14 year olds indicate that they go into chat rooms - of those 66% visit private and adult-only chat rooms
- ◆ The majority of youth who visit private and adult-only chat rooms indicate they they are at home but unsupervised when using the Internet (85%) and they have no household rule for this practice
  
- ◆ 38% of young people say that their parents know nothing or very little about their online activities
- ◆ 1 in 4 youth have been sent porn on the Internet by a stranger
- ◆ 40% of youth have been asked for personal information by a stranger
- ◆ There are over 500,000 adult-oriented web sites on the Internet
  
- ◆ 7 in 10 youth have an email account
- ◆ 1 in 2 youth have an email account that their parents don't know about
- ◆ Less than 4 in 10 parents said their children have accounts
- ◆ 4 in 5 youth have a "free" uncontrolled email account



Statistics provided by Susheel Gupta, Federal Department of Justice and Detective Glenn Gervais, Child Exploitation Unit, Windsor Police Service.

### **Internet Relay Chat ("Chatlines" or "Chatrooms"):**

- Real-time chat between two or more individuals. People 'chat' by typing words to one another.
- Consists of a network of interconnected chat servers located all over the world
- You can be who you want to be. (So can everyone else!)
- Effective way to communicate with others throughout the world, without long distance phone charges (only cost is for Internet connection)
- People in chatrooms should be classified as strangers.

### **Newsgroups:**

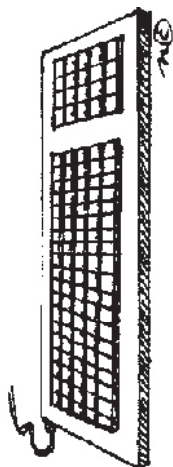
- Worldwide system of discussion groups on the Internet with no formal organization or rules
- Like an electronic bulletin board where people share ideas on a common topic.
- People can: Post messages, "Lurk" (browse but not post), "Thread" (respond to postings)

### **Instant Messaging (IM):**

- Free programs that let you know when your friends and contacts are online in real time (MSN Messenger)
- Users create a contact list and then send messages, chat, send files etc.
- Program allows you to page other users and chat with them in real time
- Often have profile pages for personal details (i.e. address, birthday, hobbies) - should avoid filling these in

### **Peer to Peer:**

- Software programs such as WinMx, KaZaA Lite, EDonkey, Direct Connect, Songspy, Grokster, Imesh
- File sharing online allowing users to exchange files and data without going through a centralized system – directly exchange file systems at-will
- Developed originally to trade music files but now is a popular location for trading pornography



# Safe Surfing 101

## When Parents Become Concerned

The Internet is fun and can be a useful tool for communication, research and entertainment.

The benefits of the internet certainly outweigh the risks, however the risks are real and should be taken into consideration. Remember that the Internet is full of strangers and is largely unpoliced and unregulated. There are opportunities for your children to be exploited, abused or exposed to age-inappropriate material. Also, computers, video games and other electronic media can have an addictive or all-consuming effect on some children or adults. Children can become absorbed in 'cyberspace', leaving little or no time for social interaction, homework or physical activity.

### Media Violence and Kids

Research has shown that violence in most forms of screen media such as films, videos, televisions, computer games and Internet can have a negative effect on children; particularly young children. Children exposed to a steady diet of violent media are at risk in several ways:

- Learning more aggressive behaviour
- Becoming desensitized to people being hurt
- Becoming fearful of their everyday world
- Becoming less able to distinguish between fantasy and reality



( Note: more information on the effects of media violence can be found on page 45 of this guide)

### Signs that Your Child May Have a Problem

- ◆ Child becomes withdrawn from family activities, playtime, outside time, sports or other activities with friends
- ◆ Child spends an unusually great amount of time on computer
- ◆ Getting online is always a priority - eating meals in front of computer, staying up late to finish games, missing out on school, homework or other activities
- ◆ Child is talking about friends and places you've never heard of
- ◆ Child is talking only and all the time about the computer, while losing interest in other hobbies
- ◆ Inappropriate sexual behaviour or language
- ◆ Copying combat/martial arts moves or fantasizing about computer characters
- ◆ Receives gifts from someone you don't know
- ◆ Quickly changes computer screen when surprised or others enter room
- ◆ Becomes upset/irrational when asked to turn the computer off or becomes aggressive/ withdrawn after shutting down