- Children must rewrite and paraphrase, not just copy material from the Internet. They must always include proper citations when they are using other people's work.
- It is against the law to copy or download some types of information or music from the Internet without permission.

Problems? Report Them!

Internet-related crime should be reported. Consult the following authorities:

- CyberTipline, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1-800-843-5678, www.missingkids.org
- Local or state police
- Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov) for consumer fraud, auction fraud, etc.
- U.S. Department of Justice (www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/reporting.htm)
- Porn spam: contact your U.S. Attorney's office; complain to your Internet Service Provider.

Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department
www.lasd.org

NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL
1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW • 13th Floor • Washington, DC 20036
www. ncpc.org

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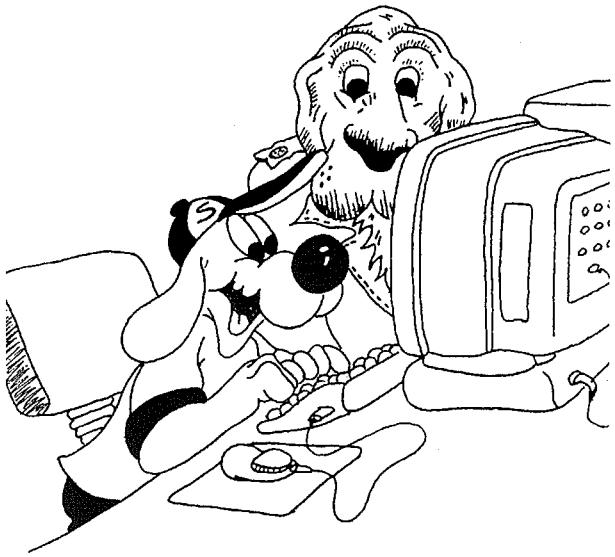
A FAMILY GUIDE TO USING THE INTERNET



TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME®

The Internet can be a wonderful tool for children and youth.

- ***Homework:*** **Kids can use the most current news, encyclopedias, and other source materials to find information for research projects.**

- ***Communication:*** **Kids can use email and public message boards to keep in touch with family and friends.**

- ***Entertainment and education:*** **Kids can use the Internet to make a virtual visit to a museum, take a college course, play games, etc.**

But the Internet can also be dangerous. Here are some things families can do to encourage today's computer-savvy young people to be computer-safe.

Using the Computer Is a Family Affair

- Agree on a list of rules and post it by the computer. The rules should cover how long children can spend on the Internet, how late they can surf the Web, what they may and may not visit on the Web, and whether or not they are allowed to make purchases over the Web. Have everyone in the household sign an Internet pledge (see www.safekids.com/kidsrules.htm).
- Talk to your kids. Keep the lines of communication open, and never blame the victim! If a child tells you about an upsetting event experienced online, don't blame him or her. How you react will affect how much he or she shares with you in the future.

Meeting People Online

- As a general rule, children should never plan to meet anybody in person whom they have encountered online. Explain that people met online may not be who they say they are.
- When face-to-face meetings seem appropriate—the person is a student from a nearby school, for example—the meeting should be arranged only with your approval. It should be in a safe public place, and you or another responsible adult should be present.
- Children should never give out personal information over the Internet. They should use an online name (not their real name) and never reveal their address, telephone number, or any identifying information.
- No pictures, letters, or telephone calls should be exchanged with online acquaintances without your approval. Monitor such communications.
- If online acquaintances send your children email that makes them uncomfortable or that they know is obscene, they should inform you at once. The same applies to information they see on message boards or chat rooms.

Making Online Purchases

- Children need to learn to be savvy consumers. The term "free" doesn't always mean free. Con artists use the term to attract more business. The children should ask you before signing up for anything over the Internet, even when signing up does not require a credit card number.
- Encourage an attitude of healthy skepticism toward websites that offer prizes or giveaways. Chances are, all the child has "won" is the opportunity to buy something he or she didn't want in the first place.
- Establish explicit rules for getting clearance for online purchases, including documentation to be kept.

Following Links

- Consider using a family-safe or child-safe search engine or a filter, blocking, or ratings system. Some services have a "kids only" section so you can be sure the children won't have access to questionable material.
- Encourage your children to ask you to check out new sites with them.
- Be responsive and nonjudgmental if they tell you about an inappropriate site they found accidentally.

Downloading From the Internet

The Internet has changed the way children do schoolwork. But they need to realize that information they find on the Internet is not all free. Be sure they understand the following:

- Teachers can easily determine if an assignment—or even one paragraph of an assignment—has been downloaded from the Internet instead of written by the student.