

uncomfortable, is suggestive, obscene, belligerent or threatening. Forward a copy to your ISP provider and ask for their assistance.

- Find out who their IM buddies are and find out who is on their friends list. Get to know your child's online friends, just as you would their real-life friends.
- Set rules for when and for how long they can be online.
- If necessary, take their computer privilege away.

For Kids:

- Protect your passwords; keep them private. Only share them with your parents.
- What you post online, stays online. It is never completely private. Do not post anything you may want to take back, including photos and other documents. Never post anything you wouldn't want a potential employer, college or sports team to see.
- NEVER make plans to meet your online "friend" in person. Someone may say they are 14 years old, but they are really 50 years old! If you do want to meet your new friend, get your parent's permission first and make sure that you meet in a public place that you are comfortable being in. Take a parent or friend with you.

- Don't share photos of yourself, your family, or your home with people you meet online.
- Don't open e-mail attachments. Delete them. They can contain viruses.
- Log off immediately and tell your parents if someone writes something that is mean, makes you feel uncomfortable, is suggestive, obscene, belligerent or threatening. Do not respond.
- NEVER give out your name, address or phone number. Use your login name, email address or a made-up "screen name" which does not reveal anything about you. Never use your name or hometown as part of your user name.
- Check to see what your friends are posting and saying about you. Even if you are careful, a friend may be putting you at risk with what they've posted about you on their site.
- Know who you are including in your IM Buddy or friend lists. If you do not approve of a user, delete the user name and block that user.
- Do not load any software from the Internet on your computer unless your parents say it's okay. Many contain spyware, spam applications or viruses that can jeopardize the privacy of you and your family.

www.missingkids.com
www.cybertipline.com



SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE SAFETY



Mesa Police Department
Crime Prevention
480-644-2300
www.mesaaz.gov/police

There are more than 350 different types of social networking sites available on the Internet. Most are free; some restrict membership by age. These sites encourage people to post profiles of themselves -- complete with pictures, interests, and even photos and journals, so they can meet like-minded friends. Most offer chat rooms. Some of the more popular social networking sites are MySpace, Flickr, Classmates.com, Facebook and Xanga.

There has been an increase in the use of social networking sites by sex offenders who troll sites, getting access to information so they can locate and communicate with potential victims. Predators count on neglect and ignorance of parents when it comes to their children's access to the Internet. Most contact with children takes place while mom and dad are watching television in the next room and are oblivious who is stalking their child over the Internet.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a CyberTipline that allows parents and children to report child pornography and other types of sexual exploitation of children via an online form. Complaints received are referred to the FBI for action should it appear that a violation of federal law has occurred. Violations of state or local law are referred to the appropriate state authorities.

Examples of complaints received by the FBI:

- A 33-year-old Alabama man met a 14-year-old girl from New Jersey over one site and later met and abused her in Florida.
- Same story -- between a 13-year-old girl from Georgia, whose online profile said she was 29, and a 30-year-old man from South Carolina.
- An 11-year-old girl was fondled in her Connecticut home -- while her parents slept -- by a man she'd met through an online network and let into her home.

Most sites take member safety seriously - however, sexual predators still manage to sneak through. Parents and legal guardians should be vigilant in monitoring the use of the Internet by minors under their supervision. The following suggestions are offered to help you and your child have a safe online experience.

For Parents:

- Monitor your child's use of the Internet at all times. Keep the computer in a place where there are other family members around, i.e. the kitchen or family room. Do not let the child have a computer in their bedroom.
- If your child is going to join a social networking site, talk about why it's so important not to disclose personal information online.

- Ensure your child is not misrepresenting their age on the Internet.
- Make sure they are not posting personal information, including school names, hometown, street where they live, where they work, local sports teams, hobbies, where they hang out, or any other information that could be used to identify and locate them offline.
- Restrict your child's profile to people your child knows personally; make sure you really know who someone is before adding them to your friends list. Most sites allow for parents to block individuals from contacting their children after viewing their child's profile. Have their profile set to "private."
- Read the safety tips listed on the site of which your child is a member, and report inappropriate activity directly to the website.
- Check to see what friends are posting and saying about them. Even if your child is careful, a friend may be putting them at risk with what they've posted on their site.
- Talk to your kids and ask questions about their activities on social networking sites. Ask to see their pages.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers of identity theft.
- Encourage your child to tell you if someone writes something that is mean, makes them feel