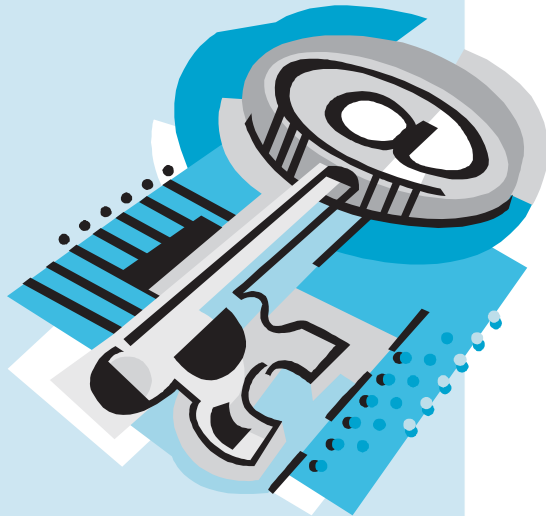


# Cyberspace



is a gigantic community of millions, where people research information for school, learn about movies, shop, listen to music, watch video clips, even develop sites of their own. As in any community, there are people and places you should avoid in order to reduce your crime risk.



## Rules of the Road on the Internet Highway

The best tool you have for screening material found on the Internet is your brain. If you come across sites that are pornographic, full of hate literature, or excessively violent, move on.

Here are a few reminders for safe browsing on the World Wide Web:

- Never give out your name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parent's name, pictures of yourself, credit cards, or any other personal information to others online.
- Never agree to meet face to face with someone you've met online without discussing it with your parents. Only if your parents decide that it's okay to meet your "cyber friend," arrange to meet in a familiar public place, and take an adult with you.
- Never respond to messages from unfamiliar persons.
- Never enter an area that charges for services without getting your parents' permission first.
- If you receive pornographic material or threatening e-mail, save the offensive material, tell your parents, and contact that user's Internet service provider and the Pima County Sheriff's Department by calling 9-1-1.

## The Sites You See (and Visit)

### E-mail

E-mail is a great way to communicate with your friends and family. Sometimes you may receive messages trying to sell you something or encouraging you to visit a Web site. It is probably best not to respond to e-mail from people or groups you don't know. These sites might be a scam to sell you something you don't want. Remember, the sender may not be who he or she seems to be.

If you respond, you are confirming that you have a valid e-mail address. That information can

## Assessing a Web Site

Aside from the fun ways to keep in touch with people, the Web can be a powerful research tool. But you need to be able to evaluate the pages you visit to know whether the information is accurate. As you visit new sites, keep these pointers in mind:

- Look for Web pages that have a proper title, additional resources, a contact person with his or her e-mail address, an announcement of the last time the page was updated, and current links.
- Know who are the authors or sponsors of the site. What gives them the authority to discuss the issue at hand? Is the main purpose of this site to sell, inform, or persuade you?
- Know the code. Check the URL (Web site address) to see what the domain name includes: a .com (commercial), a .gov (government), an .org (organization), a .net (network), an .edu (educational organization), or a two-letter country code (country of origin). This will provide an idea of the author or sponsor of the site. Not all commercial sites want to sell you something and not all educational sites will educate you. Be an educated consumer as you sort through the information.
- Verify information by comparing it to multiple and varied sources: other Web sites, library and reference materials.
- If you find information that you want to use for your research, check with the author first, about copyright privileges and permission.

encourage the sender to forward inappropriate e-mail or put your address on even more lists.

## Chat rooms

When someone is posting a message in a chat room, other users have no way of knowing who that person really is. Though the anonymity of a

chat room can be liberating—it's cool to create a different identity—some use it as a way to meet people they want to harm. Never say anything in a chat room that you wouldn't say in public. Many chat rooms have monitors or speakers who maintain order. Those monitors can kick people out of the "room" for inappropriate behavior.

If you meet someone online and strike up a good relationship with them, they may want to go to a private chat room. Most of those rooms are unmonitored. There will be no filter to discourage inappropriate conduct.

### Harassment

Not everyone online minds their manners. When you are in chat rooms or bulletin boards there is a chance that you'll get messages that are crude, demeaning, or just plain mean. Just ignore them. Some messages, however, may constitute harassment, which is a crime under federal law. If someone sends you messages or images that are obscene, lewd, filthy, or indecent, with the intent to harass or threaten you, report it to your Internet service provider. One tip to avoid harassment is to choose a gender-neutral name to use in a chat room and other "public" places on the Internet.

### Take Action

- Educate your parents. Take the time to show them what you do online.
- Show them your Web site, if you have one. Tell them who you are communicating with on a daily basis.
- Talk to your parents about where you can go online and how long you can stay online. Also, tell them about activities you participate in online.
- Teach other teens about keeping safe on the Internet.
- Know your rights—where to report crimes and what you can report.

### Contact Us

For more information on drugs, alcohol, driving safety, and other Crime Prevention issues, contact the Pima County Sheriff's Department's Community Resources Team at (520) 741-4615. We'll be happy to send you educational materials and brochures, or provide safety presentations. Call today!



PIMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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Sheriff of Pima County

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[www.pimasheriff.org](http://www.pimasheriff.org)



Crime Prevention Tips From  
National Crime Prevention Council  
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor  
Washington, DC 20006-3817  
[www.weprevent.org](http://www.weprevent.org)



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Pima County  
Sheriff's Department

# SAFE SURFING

## INTERNET AWARENESS AND CHILDREN



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