

Be Smart—Be Safe

The Internet is not anonymous. When you sign on, others have access to you. Your e-mail address, screen name, and password serve as barriers between you and others. You need to maintain this barrier by not giving out private information. There are many out there who would like to know more about you for various reasons:

- They might want to harm you.
- They might want to steal from you.
- They might use information to conduct their own business either by selling your info or by using it in an illegal manner.

Personal (Identifying) Information

This information should not be given out on the Internet to maintain your safety.

- Name
- Age
- Street address
- City / location
- Birth date
- City / location
- School name
- Gender
- Phone number
- combinations of personal information such as listed above
- combinations of personal information such as listed above plus descriptions such as (but not limited to) favorite sport, favorite celebrity, family member names, friends' names

User ID / Screen Name

Think about your own screen name. What does it say about you?

When you choose a screen name, you want something that allows you to remain anonymous, or unknown. Don't include personal information. Change yours if it's unsafe.

Profile Activity

MY PROFILE

Name:

Street address:

City:

Country:

Phone number:

E-mail address:

Date of birth:

Gender:

Number of people in your family:

School name:

Favorite celebrity:

Favorite music:

Favorite sport:

Think About It . . .

Does any of your personal/identifying information already exist in online profiles?

If you have not enabled privacy settings (some profiles do not provide privacy settings), the personal information you give out can be searched by strangers.

Tips for Safety:

- Access your existing online profiles, and check to see the kinds of information you have provided that can be searched by other users.
- Revise profiles that say too much about you.

REFERENCE PAGE—Who Knows WHAT About You?

Know about indirect information solicitation.

Sometimes people can find out all about you “indirectly” by piecing bits of seemingly unrelated information together. For example: Indirect information about your school, activities, etc., could lead someone to figure out where you live. Be aware of what you say at all times and where you say it online.

Watch out for communication dangers . . .

. . . on the Web.

- Pop-Ups – You are a WINNER! Surfing the Web often provides lots of pop-ups offering free merchandise, contests, and survey forms to fill out. Information you provide can be used to create e-mail spam and will make MORE pop-ups!
- Web Sites You Visit – Some Web sites ask you for private information before you can access their stuff. Make sure you ask your parents before giving anyone private information on online forms.
- Your Own Web Site – Many young people now have their own Web sites or social networking pages. Be cautious about what information you display.

. . . in an e-mail.

- Spam – Many companies advertise via e-mail and ask for more information about you. Do not respond to these e-mails; DELETE them!
- Be careful when you reply to an e-mail. You are including your e-mail address and don't know where it will go from there.
- Remember: The sender of an e-mail may not be someone you know. Don't send personal information, photographs, etc.

. . . when chatting, IMing, or gaming.

Instant communication can result in revealing information you wouldn't normally reveal. This can leave you open to harm.

- Keep online interaction online. Don't agree to meet or phone people met online.
- Don't give out personal information. Be careful about indirectly saying too much about yourself. Eventually you will have said enough.
- Private chats aren't always private. When you meet offline friends online in a private chat room, be careful. Others can often enter and lurk (watch what you say about yourself).