



Crime Prevention Tips

Internet Safety Skills



Crime Prevention . . . a community responsibility

Boost your Internet safety skills

The Internet opens up a world of information and is quickly becoming an integral tool with ready access whenever and wherever you are through cell phones and computers. Internet safety involves ensuring that people, specifically children and youth, have the information needed to develop safe online surfing habits.

Why is Internet safety important?

In 2007, 73%¹ of Canadians used the web and British Columbians were the leading consumers with 78%. In Canada, young people lead the trend with 96% of youth regularly accessing the web. A 2009 Microsoft Canada survey states that youth understand that online safety is an issue and rated it as their top concern. Growing access to high speed connections has made it easier for Canadians to spend more leisure time online to browse for information and news, complete homework, participate in online games, and connect with family and friends.

Sexting

Sexting is growing in popularity, especially amongst teens. It involves electronically sending sexually explicit messages, photos and/or videos primarily by a connected cell phone. **Warning:** These photos can easily be uploaded to the web and shared via text messaging as well as e-mail.

¹ Statistics Canada

Basic Internet safety is common sense. Here are a few pointers to keep in mind when you or your family members are online:

- **Computer Placement**
Place Internet connected computers and webcams in high traffic areas such as a kitchen or living room.
- **Online Guidelines**
Create an age appropriate, online safety agreement with your family and post it at each connected computer terminal. Ask your Internet Service Provider (ISP) what parental control software it offers and check your local computer store for filtering and blocking software.
- **Avoid giving out identifying information**
Choose an online nick name or alias; don't provide personal information such as birth dates, home address, school name or phone numbers; occasionally change your password using words and numbers that don't give away personal information.



*This tip sheet was compiled in partnership with the "E" Division RCMP
Crime Prevention & Program Support Services Youth Strategies Section (604) 264-2230.*



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Think
b4u
Click

Digital images and videos posted online are permanent and can quickly and widely be shared through connected mobile phones, handheld gaming devices and computers. Social networking sites and blogging is hugely popular with social media tools such as Facebook, MySpace, MSN Messenger and Twitter making it easier to stay in touch and keep abreast of the latest information. Most social networking and blogging sites have video sharing capabilities built into their sites.

Tip: If you choose to share photos, place them on password protected sites and set security settings to the highest level.

Parents:

- Read a websites' privacy policy before providing personal information.
- Check Instant Messaging contact lists to see who your child is chatting with.
- Ensure that your child knows how to block unwanted contacts.
- Keep webcams unplugged when not in use.

Adult Content

Adult content is easy to stumble upon and to purposefully access through sexually explicit, hate propaganda and violent sites. Video sharing sites such as YouTube offer easy access to this type of content.

Online Gaming

Online gaming is popular with youth, especially males. Games are usually played in online communities with the use of game chats and messages and voice chatting through the use of a headset. Fellow gamers are likely strangers and harassment can occur by griefers (online cyber bullies).

Parent tips to keep gaming safe and fun:

- Create a gaming agreement with your teen that includes choosing appropriate game tags (screen and character names) and a list of permitted game sites.
- Review game ratings and privacy statements.
- Periodically observe play and monitor games chats for offensive language.

Online Gambling

Online gambling games such as poker, casinos, betting, and bingo are easily accessible by youth despite the fact that it is illegal for minors to play. A credit card is needed to play and if gambling gets out of hand, debts can quickly accrue.

Parents:

- Discourage your kids from visiting gambling sites.
- Don't give them permission to use a family credit card.

Child Pornography

Child pornography should be reported to www.cybertip.ca, Canada's national tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

For more information visit the following Canadian websites:

Internet 101 Toolkit
www.internet101.ca

Media Awareness Network
www.media-awareness.ca

Protect your computer, your information, your family and yourself
<http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/cbr/prtct-pc-eng.aspx>