

Internet Safety Tips

Written by Mike Honda

Tuesday, 03 October 2006 19:00

Last week, I was shocked and dismayed to learn of [allegations of very improper behavior](#) by former Representative Mark Foley. In light of this situation, we are reminded that as responsible adults, we need to constantly be aware of our children's activities. In today's age of technology, our children are spending more and more time on the internet for school and work.

In addition, with the increasing popularity of Internet social networking sites such as Myspace and Facebook, it has become extremely important to keep our children safe from on-line predators and strangers.

The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) offers the following guidelines to help keep your children safe and secure:

- **Supervise Computer Use** : Keep the computer in an open area, like a kitchen or family room, and be aware of other computers and Internet-enabled devices that your child may be using outside of the home.

- **Keep the Lines of Communication Open**: Use the Internet with your child. Be familiar with your child's on-line activities and talk with your child about the websites that he or she visits. Understanding how your child uses the Internet will give you a better idea of the on-line safety risks that he or she may face.

- **Take an Active Approach to Virtual Parenting**: Consider installing software or parental control tools that will allow you to monitor and/or control where your child goes on-line, and what information he or she shares on the Internet. These tools can empower you to set on-line boundaries for your child, change your child's privacy settings and restrict access to potentially dangerous websites. But remember—no program is a substitute for parental supervision.

- **Search Blog Sites**: To determine the availability of information regarding your child, do an on-line search. Type in your child's name, nickname, school, hobbies, grade or residence to find out if your child is engaging in risky on-line behavior.

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- **Pay Attention to On-line Photos:** Children use various forms of technology to post information and photos on-line, such as videos, webcams and camera phones. Make sure that your child's photos do not reveal identifying information or would otherwise pose a risk by exposing your child to on-line predators and strangers.

For more information about cyber security and additional on-line safety tips, you may visit the NCSA website at <http://www.staysafeonline.info/> .