Rationale

It's an unfortunate reality; with each new form of technology that emerges come people who wish to exploit it. And although the Internet may seem safe and anonymous, it is anything but that for unsuspecting young people. Over the past year we have read and heard of many cases involving children falling prey to unscrupulous people via "meetings" in chat rooms or the posting of information on the internet. Given the prevalence of this threat we are at a point where we must warn our children and others of the dangers involved in seemingly benign conversations on the Internet. A simple phrase can easily give a predator all the information he or she may need to track and trace the victim. Every child knows not to talk to strangers but somewhere along the line this message has been lost when using the Internet. A predator knows this and therein lies the danger.

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Helpful Information

INTERNET SITES

WWW.iSAFE.ORG (for Middle School Students)

WWW.MoralMetric.COM (for all)

WWW.MISSINGKIDS.COM (for all)

WWW.IDTHECREEP.COM (for Elem. Students)

WWW.NETSMARTZ.ORG (for Elem. Students)

WWW.NETSMARTZ 411.ORG (for parents)

WWW.FBI.GOV/INNOCENT.HTM (for all)

http://TCS.CYBERTIPLINE.ORG (for all)

MEGAN'S LAW SITES (for parents)

http://FAMILYBEACON.COM (for parents)

WWW.FAMILYWATCHDOG.US (for parents)

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PUBLISHED ARTICLES by CHUCK FAVATA

Middle Ground Magazine
Aug. 2008
"Online Social Networking: Keeping Kids Safe"

Learning and Leading Magazine
Dec/Jan 2006-07 Vol. 34 No.4
Counterpoint to:
"Does Social Networking Have a Place in Schools"

Middle Matters Magazine
Oct. 2006 Vol.14 No.2
"Internet Safety: What Educators Need to Know"

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READING TO YOUR CHILD

one of the few books on Internet Safety dedicated to the Elementary age student
"WolfwillBuildforFood.com"
(A light hearted picture book with a three little pigs theme)
WWW.PLAYGROUNDPUBLISHING.COM

Internet Safety: What Educators Need to Know

Chuck Favata
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Educators must help parents understand the potential dangers that exist on the Internet and encourage them to provide the same degree of oversight as they would for any other activity in which their child is involved.

Electronic White Pages for Predators

While *"www"* is short for World Wide Web, an equally accurate translation might be the *Whole World is Watching*. The numbers of members using social networking internet sites are expanding at astonishing rates (over 150,000 new members daily). Unfortunately, many of the young people who post on these sites think only their friends are viewing their information and photos. This is not the case, others can readily access the postings or go through a process of searching page information on the internet to find other places where information has been posted. The reality is with 50,000 predators online at any given time, and 600,000 registered sex offenders in the US, it is not a stretch to label social networking sites as the Electronic White Pages for predators. Once information about a target is gathered it is not a large step to lure the target into a chat room where the real danger begins. Remember 89% of all solicitations occur in chat rooms.

Chuck Favata is a retired computer integration teacher who is a public speaker on Internet Safety. For more information visit: www.chuckfavata.com

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO DO

Parents must not be complacent, they need to take an active role in the supervision of their child's online activities and have dialog with their child about the limits being set and why they are setting them. A child may claim parents are invading their privacy when they look at what has been posted online but the reality is by posting on a social networking sites or conversing in chat rooms youngsters have given up all rights to privacy. Parents must talk about the real dangers that exist in cyberspace, and make modifications to what Is posted on these sites with their child. It also can be useful to go to the Megan's Law listing for their area so their child can see the number of sex offenders living in their immediate area. Parents cannot emphasize enough to their child the fact that while the Internet can be fun it also can be dangerous.

Parents should also:

- Take ownership of your son/daughter's computer activity.
- Find out who are your son/daughter's online "buddies".
- Register on most social networking sites and use the "Help" menu to find instructions on monitoring, modifying and/or deleting postings.
- Parents of younger elementary age children should keep in mind that socializing online through any means at such a young age merely serves to desensitize the child to the inherent dangers of online conversations.

General Internet Safety Guidelines

DO NOT "TALK" TO STRANGERS.

Also be sure to share the following with your son/daughter/students:

- Never agree to meet anyone met online
- Never give out any personal information
- Never "Talk" to an unknown screen name
- Never call anyone met online
- Never give your school's name
- Never tell your location - state, town, street - etc.
- Never give permission to "Allow People to Search for Me"
- Never give out your email address
- Never put friends' names in your profile
- Never talk P2P or send a file to a "screen name"
- Never enter chat rooms