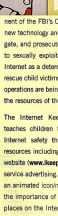




The Internet has had a serious impact on the sexual exploitation of children, specifically the distribution of sexually exploitive images of children. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the use of home-computer technology has revolutionized the distribution of these images by increasing the ease and decreasing the cost of production and distribution, especially across international borders. A greater number of child molesters are now using computer technology, not only to organize and maintain their collections of these illegal images, but to add to them as well.

The Internet has also dramatically increased sex offenders' access to the population they seek to victimize. Although some computer sex offenders primarily collect and trade child pornographic images over the Internet, others seek face-to-face meetings with children via online contacts. Once contact is made, child molesters may use pornography to seduce their prey, to lower the victim's inhibitions, and to serve as a kind of instruction manual—claiming to prove to the child that sex between an adult and a child is "normal." Whether children come across pornography accidentally online or are deliberately exposed to it, viewing these images can result in devastating psychological effects.



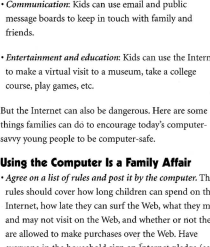
**The use of home-computer technology has revolutionized the distribution of sexually exploitive images of children by increasing the ease and decreasing the cost.**

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess, distribute, or manufacture pornographic images of children. The Innocent Images National Initiative (IINI), a component of the FBI's Cyber Crimes Program, is a multi-agency initiative that uses new technology and sophisticated investigative techniques to identify, investigate, and prosecute sexual predators who use the Internet and online services to sexually exploit children; establish a law enforcement presence on the Internet as a deterrent to those who use it to exploit children; and identify and rescue child victims. To proactively combat this crime problem, IINI undercover operations are being conducted in FBI field offices by task forces that combine the resources of the FBI with other enforcement agencies.

The Internet Keep Safe Coalition teaches children the basic rules of Internet safety through a variety of resources including children's books, a website ([www.ikeepSAFE.org](http://www.ikeepSAFE.org)), and public service advertising. The website features an animated icon/mascot named Faux Paw the Techno Cat to teach children the importance of protecting personal information and avoiding inappropriate places on the Internet. The Internet Keep Safe Coalition is a partnership of several governors' first spouses, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and corporate sponsors. Members include the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the FBI Internet Crimes Taskforce, the U.S. Department of Justice, the American Medical Association, and the National Crime Prevention Council. The Coalition works to customize the program for individual states.



# A Family Guide to Using the Internet



## The Internet can be a wonderful tool for children and youth

- **Homework:** Kids can use the most current news, encyclopedias, and other source materials to find information for research projects.
  - **Communication:** Kids can use email and public message boards to keep in touch with family and friends.
  - **Entertainment and education:** Kids can use the Internet to make a virtual visit to a museum, take a college course, play games, etc.
- But the Internet can also be dangerous. Here are some things families can do to encourage today's computer-savvy young people to be computer-safe.

## Using the Computer Is a Family Affair

• **Agree on a list of rules and post it by the computer.** The rules should cover how long children can spend on the Internet, how late they can surf the Web, what they may and may not visit on the Web, and whether or not they are allowed to make purchases over the Web. Have everyone in the household sign an Internet pledge (see [www.safekids.com/kidsrules.htm](http://www.safekids.com/kidsrules.htm)).

• **Talk to your kids.** Keep the lines of communication open, and never blame the victim! If a child tells you about an upsetting event experienced online, don't blame him or her. How you react will affect how much he or she shares with you in the future.

## Meeting People Online

- **As a general rule, children should never plan to meet anybody in person whom they have encountered online.** Explain that people met online may not be who they say they are.
- **When face-to-face meetings seem appropriate—the person is a student from a nearby school, for example—the meeting should be arranged only with your approval.** It should be in a safe public place, and you or another responsible adult should be present.
- **Children should never give out personal information over the Internet.** They should use an online name (not their real name) and never reveal their address, telephone number, or any identifying information.
- **No pictures, letters, or telephone calls should be exchanged with online acquaintances without your approval.** Monitor such communications.
- **If online acquaintances send your children email that makes them uncomfortable or that they know is obscene, they should inform you at once.** The same applies to information they see on message boards or

## Making Online Purchases

- **Children need to learn to be savvy consumers.** The term "free" doesn't always mean free. Con artists use the term to attract more business. The children should ask you before signing up for anything over the Internet, even when signing up does not require a credit card number.
- **Encourage an attitude of healthy skepticism toward websites that offer prizes or giveaways.** Chances are, all the child has "won" is the opportunity to buy something he or she didn't want in the first place.
- **Establish explicit rules for getting clearance for online purchases, including documentation to be kept.**

## Following Links

- **Consider using a family-safe or child-safe search engine or a filter, blocking, or ratings system.** Some services have a "kids only" section so you can be sure the children won't have access to questionable material.
- **Encourage your children to ask you to check out new sites with them.**
- **Be responsive and nonjudgmental** if they tell you about an inappropriate site they found accidentally.

## Downloading From the Internet

The Internet has changed the way children do schoolwork. But they need to realize that information they find on the Internet is not all free. Be sure they understand the following:

- **Teachers can easily determine** if an assignment—or even one paragraph of an assignment—has been downloaded from the Internet instead of written by the student.
- **Children must rewrite and paraphrase,** not just copy material from the Internet. They must always include proper citations when they are using other people's work.
- **It is against the law to copy or download** some types of information or music from the Internet without permission.

## Problems? Report Them!

Internet-related crime should be reported. Consult the following authorities:

- **CyberTipline, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 800-843-5678, [www.missingkids.org](http://www.missingkids.org)**
- **Local or state police**
- **Federal Trade Commission ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov))** for consumer fraud, auction fraud, etc.
- **U.S. Department of Justice, [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/reporting.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/reporting.htm)**
- **Porn spam:** contact your U.S. Attorney's office; complain to your Internet Service Provider.



Crime Prevention Tips From

**NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL**

1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Thirteenth Floor  
Washington, DC 20038-5328  
202-462-0272  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

and



**BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance**  
Office of Justice Programs • U.S. Department of Justice

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