



## Minnesota County Attorney Association's Crime Prevention Tip

Technology and the internet has changed the ways in which work and live, allowing us to connect with each other, learn new things, and share ideas in ways not imagined 20 years ago. As our children also have access to the internet, it's important to remember that predators are using the internet to find, groom and take advantage of their next victim.

We have seen numerous cases where adults have preyed upon young victims to sexually exploit or abuse them. Parents need to remember that the internet is another pathway into our homes, and that predators are looking for their next victim online. It's extremely important that parents talk to their children about online safety, just as they do about other dangers.

Below are some tips that have been adapted from the FBI's "A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety":

### ***Parents Should:***

- Talk to your child about potential dangers online.
- Spend time with your children online - have them teach you about their favorite websites.
- Keep the computer in a common room, not in your child's bedroom.
- Use controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software.
- Discourage or prohibit your child's use of chat rooms; or, ensure chat room use is heavily monitored.
- Check your child's accounts and email. Be up front with your child about your access, and why this is important.
- Teach your child the responsible use of the resources online.
- Find out what computer safeguards are utilized by your child's school, the public library, and at the homes of your child's friends.

### ***Instruct Your Children:***

- Never send a photo of themselves to someone they don't know in person.
- Make sure that any photos sent are appropriate.
- When you post something on the internet, it can spread quickly and be hard to delete
- Never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met online.
- Don't give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number.
- Don't download pictures from an unknown source.
- Never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, or mean.
- Remind them that whatever they are told online may not be true.

### **Additional Resources**

[www.kids.usa.gov](http://www.kids.usa.gov)

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)