

Decoding the Language of Youth

What do I need to be aware of?

Internet	Browsing sites (Inappropriate material may include something sexual in nature, hate speech or others)
IM'ing	Instant messaging
Blogs	Online Diaries
Chat Rooms	Can be about anything
Social Networks	Examples: Myspace, Friendster, Xanga, Facebook.
Cell Phones	Text Messaging

Remember that some issues are important to you as a family; others can actually have very serious consequences including harassment, kidnapping, assault or even death.

Crimes

- Sending viruses
- Hacking
- Illegal downloading of software or other copyrighted material
- Gambling
- Illegal purchases or distribution of narcotics or weapons
- Fraud
- Distribution of narcotics or weapons

Parental Controls

More than half of American families with teens use filters to limit access to potentially harmful online content. You need to know what these tools can and cannot do and how they work.

They are very effective at limiting time spent online, the sites kids can visit and the types of communications they can use. But no filtering software is perfect; so many things will slip through. They will also block sites that are valid information. They also do not block what a child can say on a blog or other social networks. Some do not work with peer-to-peer networks where you can exchange files like pictures, music, text, videos etc. The most important steps for you to take as a parent is to be involved, be honest and be upfront about appropriate use and that you will be monitoring all computer usage.

Parents also can use monitoring software that will follow their children's every keystroke.

Develop a trusting relationship so that if they do experience a problem online they will feel comfortable coming to you. And don't get mad at them with what they may show or tell you -- they may not come to you the next time something questionable happens.

Make sure you install and keep updated your virus software.

Tips to help keep children safe online.

- Regularly Google your child's name, full name, nick-names with Ahwatukee, with Phoenix, without to see what is out there if anything
- The number one thing you can remind your children not to do is share private or personal information.
- Explain what information is considered personal
- Keep the computer in a public area, such as the living room
- Set and enforce rules for Internet access
- Learn about the capabilities and limitations of parental control tools
- Learn about other computers your child may use, such as ones at school or a friend's house
- Have your child show you what he does online
- Visit your child's favorite sites, and randomly check her e-mail
- Know if your child has free web-based email accounts like hotmail and yahoo and know their user names and passwords.
- Monitor all profiles for Myspace, Face book etc.
- Report suspected stalking or child sexual exploitation to local police
- Web cams are a bad idea; unless you specifically need one, don't have one.

For the computer

- Remind kids never to click on links or run programs from you email
- Do not let them respond to angry, threatening or other inappropriate email
- Check if they have a credit report, if they do it's a problem
- School records – make sure social security card and birth certificate info is sealed
- Check for marketing mailings in their names, bills, tickets or magazines

Chat Room Safety Tips

- Don't say anything you wouldn't want anyone else to know - this includes your full name, your address, phone number or other personal information.
- Never agree to meet someone in person that you meet in a chat room.
- Use a nick-name for your screen name that doesn't give away your real name.
- Do not let anyone know your real location or places you go to.
- If anyone says anything that makes you uncomfortable — block them

Social Networks:

The simplest thing to do is to set profiles to private. The user must then add you as a friend to see his/her profile.

Check all your profiles – MySpace, Facebook or any other social network – without Google. Log out of MySpace and see what anyone can see. MySpace will still show your profile photo and quote – make sure those are presentable.

Facebook – click “My Privacy”. If you “poke” or request to add anyone as a friend, they’ll be able to see your profile.

Cell Phones:

Many providers allow limited text messaging or minutes, some have family locators.

Sites:

www.chatdanger.com - advise for parents on how to recognize and prevent problems.

www.cybertipline.com

www.disneymobile.com or call 1-866-DISNEY2

<http://www.netsmartz.org>

Parent and Child Pledge

Parents:

I will get to know the services and websites my child uses, if I don't know how to use them; I'll get my child to show me.

We will follow rules and guidelines for computer use and discuss these rules and post them near the computer. It's the parent's responsibility to monitor compliance with these rules, particularly time spent on the computer

Do not use a television or a computer as an electronic babysitter.

Kids:

I will not give out personal information such as my full name, address, phone, parents work address/phone or name and location of my school

I will tell my parents if any information makes me uncomfortable

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without checking with my parents, if they agree, it will be a public place and one of my parents will come along

I will never send a picture of anything else to anyone

I will not respond to messages that are mean or in any way make me uncomfortable, I will tell my parents so they can contact the service provider

I will talk with my parents and discuss rules for going online

I will not give out my Internet password to anyone, even my best friends, other than my parents

I will check with my parents before downloading or installing any software or anything that could jeopardize the family's privacy

I will not do anything that hurts other people or is against the law

I will help my parents understand what I'm doing online
