School Safety Center

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY:
FAQ ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

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FREQUENT QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

Why do I need to be concerned about what my child is doing online?

It's easy for kids to think they're anonymous online, because they're interacting only with a screen and not directly with a person. They forget that what they post becomes public. One of the biggest dangers is risky content. Despite some efforts to regulate content, some of the most popular sites, including YouTube and Google Video, will host disrespectful and inappropriate content. I n addition, there are plenty of sites off the beaten path where anything goes. You don't want your child stumbling into adult movies or attending virtual wild parties. Nor do you want them connecting with online predators.

Why is cyberbullying a problem?

With virtually unlimited access to video cameras and phones, kids can post any photo or footage for the world to see. Unfortunately, some take advantage of this and post unflattering or incriminating videos and photos of others online. Talk to your kids about cyberbullying. Make sure they are not a cyberbully—or a victim.

How big of a problem are online predators?

The risk of online predators will not go away, especially with the increase in interactive and engaging sites where kids are encouraged to share personal information and generate personalized content. Online predators get the most attention when it comes to online safety, but what parents don't realize is that biggest predator threat isn't strangers—it's your child's peers. Kids are more likely to suffer from posting—or having someone they know posting—something inappropriate online.[1]

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1. Anne Collier, "A Better Safety Net: It's Time to Get Smart about Online Safety," *School Library Journal* (2009), http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/ca6703696.html.