



The Facts on Teen Internet Use

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch

- 42% of parents do not monitor the content of the messages sent and received by their teens;¹
- 50% of teens (aged 13-18) frequently communicate online with someone they have never met in person;²
- 42% say they have posted information about themselves on the Internet so others may contact them;
- 30% have talked about meeting someone whom they have only met through the Internet;
- 12% have learned that someone they were communicating with online was an adult pretending to be younger;
- 37% have received a link to sexually explicit content;
- 11% were solicited online by adults and kept the incident from their parents;
- 28% of teens admit to *daily* using a code to signal to their correspondent that a parent is watching;
- 17% believe that online communication with people they do not know is OK because it is not "real."

Where To Get More Information

- General Internet Safety: www.NetSafeKids.org
www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguide.htm
- Internet Filtering Software: <http://kids.GetNetWise.org/tools/>
- Internet Safety Training: www.NetSmartz.org
www.I-Safe.org
- Internet Crimes Against Children: www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/police/icac/icac.html

¹ Parents' Internet Monitoring Study, Cox Communication and The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and NetSmartz by the Ketchum Global Resource Network, February 2005.

² Unless otherwise noted, statistics are courtesy of an October 2005 Polly Klaas Foundation survey of nearly 1,500 children aged 8-18.



Social Networking Sites Have Been Linked to Crimes Around the Nation

Some of the more serious crimes include:

- A St. Paul, Mn., mother called police after she found a birthday card her 15-year-old intended to give to a 29-year-old man she met at MySpace. Ronald Abshire, a convicted sex offender admitted to police that he and the girl had had sex 15 times. Both the offender and the girl had pages on the website. (Star Tribune, Feb. 16, 2006).
- In January 2006, Benjamin Fawley, 38, was indicted on a first-degree murder charge in the death of college freshman Taylor Behl, who had disappeared in September. She had allegedly communicated with him through MySpace.
- In December 2005, Joshua Perry, 27, was convicted of sexual misconduct in Maine for having a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl after he read her profile on MySpace.
- In November 2005, David Ludwig, 18, of Lititz, Pa., was arrested and charged with shooting to death the parents of his 14-year-old girlfriend, whom he had met on MySpace. The parents were killed after they tried to break up the relationship.
- In September 2005, a 16-year-old girl in Port Washington, N.Y., was abducted and molested after trading messages on MySpace with a 37-year-old man. She included where she worked on her MySpace profile.
- In June 2005, Richard Alan Butenhof, 35, was charged with molesting a 12-year-old girl from Folsom, Ca., after sending sexually explicit messages to her on MySpace.

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