



DANGERS LURKING ON THE SCREEN
CHRYSALIS ROUNDTABLES
in partnership with **DES MOINES POLICE DEPARTMENT**
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The internet has drastically changed the way children now interact with the world. They have access to knowledge, tools to express creativity, and opportunities to connect with people across the globe. In addition, the internet poses a number of risks.

Recognizing the warning signs of inappropriate internet usage will allow trusted adults to intervene and reduce possible negative impacts. Parents or guardians must stay informed about what your children are using and experiencing, both on and off the internet and be willing to start conversations about personal safety and responsible behavior.

Since over 95% of U.S. teens (ages 12-17) are online, parents and guardians must create an environment at home that promotes internet safety. Some basic tips include:

- ♦ Keep computers in a high-traffic area of the home.
- ♦ Establish limits for which online sites children may visit and set time restrictions for use of these sites.
- ♦ Monitor cell phones, gaming devices, and laptop computers as well as the family desktop computer.
- ♦ Use the internet with your children and let them show you what they like to do online.
- ♦ Know who is connecting with your children and set limits for social networking, instant messaging, e-mailing, online gaming, and use of webcams.
- ♦ If your teens have a blog, be certain to read and monitor for content.
- ♦ Talk with your children about online safety often. Use current news stories and personal experiences for conversation starter ideas.

Here are some facts about potential risks to children and teens when they are "online" -

SOCIAL NETWORKING: 72% of teens have a social networking profile and nearly half have a public profile viewable by anyone. Teens often include the following information on their social networking profiles: photos of themselves (62%), real age (50%), school name/location (45%), city, or neighborhood they live in (41%), videos of friends (16%), videos of themselves (14%), personal cell phone number (14%), and places they often go (9%).

CYBERBULLYING: More than half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, the same number who have engaged in cyberbullying. One in 3 youths have experienced cyber threats online.

SEXTING: One of 5 teens report they have electronically sent or posted online a nude or semi-nude picture or video of themselves; 60% send "sext" messages to a boyfriend or girlfriend. Nearly half say it is common for sext messages to be shared with people other than the intended recipient.

ONLINE GAMING: Key concerns about the popularity of video games include violence, sexual content including pornography, "virtual sex" games, predators, cyberbullies, privacy issues, age-appropriate content, webcams, and voice-masking technology.

ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY: One-third of the internet industry is pornography; "teen porn" searches have more than tripled between 2005 and 2013. Every second, nearly 29,000 internet viewers (U.S.) are viewing pornography; American children begin consuming hardcore pornography at an average age of 11.

PREDATORS: One in 5 U.S. teens report they have received an unwanted sexual solicitation via the internet (requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual conversations or to give personal sexual information). There are estimated to be over 5 million predators surfing the internet on a regular basis; their tools of choice are chat rooms, internet messaging, and webcams, and of those only 5% pretend to be teenagers.

Internet Safety Tips for Parents

- ♦ Do teach your child not to post identifying information on the Internet.
- ♦ Do set a limit for how much time your child can spend online.
- ♦ Do keep the computer in a public room in the house. Do not have an Internet-connected computer in your child's bedroom.
- ♦ Do utilize parental controls provided by your Internet Service Provider and/or blocking software. (Contact your Internet ISP if you have questions).
- ♦ Do periodically review your child's computer and emails. You should have your child's password.
- ♦ Do spend time with your child online. Have them show you their favorite online destinations. Get to know your child's online friends as you would their real-life friends. Learn to navigate the web.
- ♦ Do monitor your child's access to the Internet outside the home.
- ♦ Do talk to your child about the danger of Internet predators.
- ♦ Do watch for unexplained changes in your child's behavior.
- ♦ Do NOT hesitate to seek help from law enforcement if you think a predator may be targeting your child.

For more helpful Internet safety information, please visit www.netismartz.org. Netsmartz.org has age-appropriate videos, activities, and information for students in elementary school, middle school, and high school.

**Chrysalis Roundtables in partnership with Des Moines Police Department
7:30-9 am, Metro Waste Authority Board Room**

**December 5 – How to Enjoy a Safe Holiday
January 30 – Violence and Young Children
February 27 – Mental Health Care for the Homeless
March 27 – The Latest “High” – New Drugs on the Street
April 25 – Don’t Be a Victim – Personal Safety
May 29 – Fifth Judicial District: What Do They Do?
June – Gangs, Violence, and Social Media**