



Social Networking Websites: Safety Tips for Teens



October 2007

Marc Liron - Microsoft MVP

www.marctalkstech.com/guides.html



DISCLAIMER AND/OR LEGAL NOTICES:

The information presented herein these pages represents the view of the author at the date of publication and current information available on this reports topic. Because of the rate at which Microsoft updates their operating systems with system updates and security patches etc, the author can not anticipate any possible future changes to the information provided herein.

This report is for informational purposes only. Whilst every attempt has been made to verify the information provided in this report, neither the author nor his affiliates/partners assume any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies or omissions.

The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for every situation.

This work is sold with the understanding that the author is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or any other professional services. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought.

The fact that an organisation or website is mentioned herein does not mean that the author endorses the information that the organisation or website may provide or recommend.



Family Safety from Windows Live OneCare can help protect your children online

With Family Safety, you can specify the people your children can communicate with, the websites they can view, and the search results they are shown.

To begin using Family Safety, click **Get started**. If you've already set up Family Safety, and want to manage your account, click **Sign in**.

[Get started](#) [Sign in](#)

Who are my kids talking to?



- You can manage or just monitor your children's contact lists.
- When you manage the lists, your children ask you for permission to communicate with new people.
- Contact list settings can help you make instant messaging safer in Windows Live Messenger, blogging safer in Windows Live Spaces, and e-mail safer in Windows Live Hotmail.

What are my kids looking at?



- You can block all sites except kid-friendly sites and those you specify.
- Or, you can allow all sites except specific categories and sites you block.
- You can view activity reports to keep tabs on the sites your children visit.
- Get recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) based on your children's ages.

**Are You Using The "Family Safety" Software From Microsoft Yet? –
More Information Here: <https://fss.live.com>**



Social Networking Websites: Safety Tips for Teens

You've probably learned a long list of important safety and privacy lessons already: Look both ways before crossing the street; buckle up; hide your diary where your nosy brother can't find it; don't talk to strangers.

Well here is one more lesson to add to the list: Don't post information about yourself online that you don't want the whole world to know. The Internet is the world's biggest information exchange: many more people could see your information than you intend, including your parents, your teachers, your employer, the police — and strangers, some of whom could be dangerous.

Social networking sites have added a new factor to the "friends of friends" equation. By providing information about yourself and using blogs, chat rooms, email, or instant messaging, you can communicate, either within a limited community, or with the world at large. But while the sites can increase your circle of friends, they also can increase your exposure to people who have less-than-friendly intentions. You've heard the stories about people who were stalked by someone they met online, had their **identity stolen**, or had their computer hacked.

Your Safety's at Stake

While social networking sites can increase your circle of friends, they also can increase your exposure to people with less-than-friendly intentions. Here are some things you can do to socialize safely online:

- **Think about how different sites work before deciding to join a site.** Some sites will allow only a defined community of users to access posted content; others allow anyone and everyone to view postings.
- **Think about keeping some control over the information you post.** Consider restricting access to your page to a select group of people, for example, your friends from school, your club, your team, your community groups, or your family.
- **Keep your information to yourself.** Don't post your full name, Social Security number, address, phone number, or bank and credit card account numbers — and don't post other people's information, either. Be cautious about posting information that could be used to identify you or locate you offline. This could include the name of your school, sports team, clubs, and where you work or hang out.



- **Make sure your screen name doesn't say too much about you.** Don't use your name, your age, or your hometown. Even if you think your screen name makes you anonymous, it doesn't take a genius to combine clues to figure out who you are and where you can be found.
- **Post only information that you are comfortable with others seeing — and knowing — about you.** Many people can see your page, including your parents, your teachers, the police, the college you might want to apply to next year, or the job you might want to apply for in five years.
- **Remember that once you post information online, you can't take it back.** Even if you delete the information from a site, older versions exist on other people's computers.
- **Consider not posting your photo.** It can be altered and broadcast in ways you may not be happy about. If you do post one, ask yourself whether it's one your mom would display in the living room.
- **Flirting with strangers online could have serious consequences.** Because some people lie about who they really are, you never really know who you're dealing with.
- **Be wary if a new online friend wants to meet you in person.** Before you decide to meet someone, do your research: Ask whether any of your friends know the person, and see what background you can dig up through online search engines. If you decide to meet them, be smart about it: Meet in a public place, during the day, with friends you trust. Tell an adult or a responsible sibling where you're going, and when you expect to be back.
- **Trust your gut if you have suspicions.** If you feel threatened by someone or uncomfortable because of something online, tell an adult you trust and report it to the police and the social networking site. You could end up preventing someone else from becoming a victim.

For More Information:

To learn more about staying safe online, visit the following organizations:

GetNetWise — www.getnetwise.org

GetNetWise is a public service sponsored by Internet industry corporations and public interest organizations to help ensure that Internet users have safe, constructive, and educational or entertaining online experiences. The GetNetWise coalition wants Internet users to be just "one click away" from the resources they need to make informed decisions about their and their family's use of the Internet.



Internet Keep Safe Coalition — www.iKeepSafe.org

iKeepSafe.org, home of Faux Paw the Techno Cat, is a coalition of 49 governors/first spouses, law enforcement, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other associations dedicated to helping parents, educators, and caregivers by providing tools and guidelines to teach children the safe and healthy use of technology. The organization's vision is to see generations of children worldwide grow up safely using technology and the Internet.

National Cyber Security Alliance — www.staysafeonline.org

NCSA is a non-profit organization that provides tools and resources to empower home users, small businesses, and schools, colleges, and universities to stay safe online. A public-private partnership, NCSA members include the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Trade Commission, and many private-sector corporations and organizations.

staysafe — www.staysafe.org

staysafe.org is an educational site intended to help consumers understand both the positive aspects of the Internet as well as how to manage a variety of safety and security issues that exist online.

Wired Safety — www.wiredsafety.org

WiredSafety.org is an Internet safety and help group. Comprised of unpaid volunteers around the world, WiredSafety.org provides education, assistance, and awareness on all aspects of cybercrime and abuse, privacy, security, and responsible technology use. It is also the parent group of Teenangels.org, FBI-trained teens and preteens who promote Internet safety.



Marc Liron – Microsoft MVP

www.marctalkstech.com/guides.html