

## Current Internet Facts

### Facts about Online Predators and Strangers online:

- Twenty-eight percent of tweens (ages 8 to 12) have been contacted over the Internet by someone they don't know (COX Tween Internet Safety Survey, July 2008).
- 32% of all teens and 43% of teens active in social networking have been contacted online by a complete stranger (Lenhart, Amanda and Maddox, Mary. "Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks – How Teens Manage their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace." April 18, 2007).
- Major risk factors for victimization by online predators include:
  - Sending personal information to unknown people or talking online about sex,
  - Visiting chatrooms, many of which are full of sexually explicit talk,
  - Having a history of being abused, delinquent, depressed, socially inept, or questioning sexual orientation or engaging in sexual risk taking (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra. "Online Predators and Their Victims," March 2008).
- Among 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders: 9% have accepted an invitation to meet someone offline. 14% talked online about sexual things, including 8% who received nude photos (McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. "Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors," June 18, 2008).
- Among 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders: 14% have accepted an invitation to meet someone offline, 23% have seen pornography, 65% have pirated music, 34% have pirated movies, and 30% have pirated software (McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. "Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors," June 18, 2008).
- Online predators typically don't stalk unsuspecting victims but seek youth who are willing to be seduced. Offenders are also usually honest with victims about their age and sexual intentions with youth (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra. "Online Predators and Their Victims," March 2008).
- Youth ages 15 to 17 are the most prone to taking risks involving contacting unknown people (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra. "Online Predators and Their Victims," March 2008).
- 69% of teens regularly receive personal messages online from people they don't know and most of them don't tell a trusted adult about it (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).
- When they receive online messages from someone they don't know, 60% of teens say they usually ask who the person is, 57% of teens claim they ignore such messages, 31% say they usually reply and chat with people they don't know, and only 21% tell a trusted adult when they receive such messages (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).

- 23% of children have had an encounter with a stranger on the Internet, including 7% of children who reported having met someone in the real world from the Internet (Harris Interactive, “Kids Outsmart Parents When it Comes to the Internet,” August 2007).
- Did you know:
  - The 1998 Protection of Children from Sexual Predators Act made it illegal to transmit obscene materials to a child under 16.
  - To date, more than 5 million child pornography images have been removed from the web because of tips made to the CyberTipline.

### Facts about Cyber Bullying:

- Cyberbullying is the willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text. It can take place in chat rooms, on social networking websites, through cell phone text messaging, email, and other web-based environments (Burgess –Proctor, Amanda; Patchin, Justin, Ph D , and Hinduja, Sameer, Ph.D. “Cyberbullying - The Victimization of Adolescent Girls,” 2007).
- Common cyberbullying behaviors include name-calling, spreading of gossip or sensitive information, threats, teasing, sexual harassment, being ignored or disrespected, and being deceived by a bully who is misrepresenting themselves (Burgess –Proctor, Amanda; Patchin, Justin, Ph D , and Hinduja, Sameer, Ph.D. “Cyberbullying - The Victimization of Adolescent Girls,” 2007).
- Surveys have estimated that between 9% and 34% of kids have experienced cyberbullying in some way over the course of a year, with about 16% targeted monthly or more often (Van Dusen, Allison. Forbes Magazine. “How to Stop Cyberbullying,” Sept 15, 2008).
- The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention now consider cyberbullying an emerging adolescent health concern (Van Dusen, Allison. Forbes Magazine. “How to Stop Cyberbullying,” Sept 15, 2008).
- While traditional bullying appears to peak in middle school and drop off as kids reach high school, cyberbullying tends to slightly increase among kids in high school (Van Dusen, Allison. Forbes Magazine. “How to Stop Cyberbullying,” Sept 15, 2008).
- “One avenue to reduce cyberbullying may be to ask youth to have clear statements on their blogs that they will not tolerate negative and rude comments. Also, it may be helpful to suggest that teens express written disapproval if they encounter someone posting offensive or malicious comments or pictures in a Blog” (Finklehor, Mitchell, and Wolak. *Crimes against Children Research Center* “Are Blogs putting Youth at Risk for Online Sexual Solicitation or Harassment?” April 2007).
- Youth who interact with strangers online are over 2 times more likely to be sexually solicited and 2.5 times more likely to be cyberbullied (Finklehor, Mitchell, and Wolak. *Crimes against Children Research Center* “Are Blogs putting Youth at Risk for Online Sexual Solicitation or Harassment?” April 2007).
- Cyberbullying happens among youth as young as second grade (McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. “Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors,” June 18, 2008).
- The Department of Justice launched the Delete Cyberbullying public service campaign on June 4, 2008 to address the widespread effects of online bullying.

### Facts about Social Networking:

- By age nine, 90% of children ages eight to twelve report having used the Internet (COX Tween Internet Safety Survey, July 2008).
- Thirty-four percent of eleven and twelve year-olds have a profile on a social networking site (COX Tween Internet Safety Survey, July 2008).
- Teens who have created profiles on social networking sites and those who have posted photos of themselves online are more likely than others to be contacted online by strangers (Smith, Aaron. *Teens who create social networking profiles or post photos online are more likely to be contacted online by people they do not know*, October 2007).
- Teens who use social networking sites to flirt are more likely to be contacted by people they do not know (Smith, Aaron. *Teens who create social networking profiles or post photos online are more likely to be contacted online by people they do not know*, October 2007).
- “Although posting personal information could play a role by, for example, giving offenders knowledge about a potential victim’s interests that can be used to begin an interaction, it is the interaction that creates the environment that enables the crime to unfold.” Posting personal information is not related to increased risk for sexual solicitation or harassment though it could be a vehicle for identity theft and other problems (Finklehor, Mitchell, and Wolak. *Crimes against Children Research Center “Are Blogs putting Youth at Risk for Online Sexual Solicitation or Harassment?”* April 2007).
- 96% of students ages 9 to 17 who have access to the Internet have used social networking technologies (Grunwald Associates, “Creating & Connecting – Research and Guidelines on Online Social and Educational Networking,” July 2007).
- 64% of teens post photos or videos of themselves online, while more than half (58%) post info about where they live. Females are far more likely than male teens to post personal photos or videos of themselves (70% vs. 58%) (Teen Research Unlimited. “Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II,” March 2007).
- Nearly one in 10 teens (8%) has posted his or her cell phone number online (Teen Research Unlimited. “Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II,” March 2007).
- 58% of teens don’t think posting photos or other personal info on social networking sites is unsafe (Teen Research Unlimited. “Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II,” March 2007).
- Nearly half of teens (47%) aren’t worried about others using their personal info in ways they don’t want (Teen Research Unlimited. “Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II,” March 2007).
- Among teens active in social networking sites, 61% post the name of their city or town, 49% post their school’s name, 29% post their email address, and 29% post their last name (Lenhart, Amanda and Maddox, Mary. “Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks – How Teens Manage their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace.” April 18, 2007).

### Facts about Cyber Crime:

- Kids as young as fourth grade have been caught pirating music, movies, and software online. By the time they reach middle school, youth as a group engage in all known forms of cyber

abuse and offending (McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. "Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors," June 18, 2008).

- When 10,000 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders were asked to describe what they use the Internet for, top responses included:
  - Pirating music (22%)
  - Pirating movies (9%)
  - Plagiarism (45%)
  - Cheating on school work (18%)
  - Small percentages of youth also participated in credit card theft, identity theft, posting nude photos, purchasing illegal drugs, writing and distributing malicious computer code, and computer hacking. (McQuade, Samuel III. www.BCybersafe.org. "Online Abuse and Crime Experiences of Youth and Young Adults," Aug 19, 2008).
  
- When young survey participants were asked what worries them about downloading digital copyrighted software, music, movies or games from the Internet without paying, the top responses were:
  - Fear of accidentally downloading a computer virus (62%),
  - Getting into legal trouble (52%)
  - Accidentally downloading spyware (51%).
  - Fear of getting in trouble with parents ranked fourth at (48%), indicating that parents represent a growing and effective influence on the online practices of youth (Harris Interactive for the Business Software Alliance. "Survey Suggests Parental Rules Matter In Encouraging Good Internet Behavior," May 2007).
  
- More than half of college and university students who download unlicensed software and other digital copyrighted files are experiencing computer viruses, spyware, and other harmful effects from their downloading activities:
  - 55% have experienced virus and spyware problems.
  - 20% have had hard drive crashes
  - 18% have had document and file losses (Ipsos for Business Software Alliance. "Public Affairs Study Fact Sheet," March 2007).
  
- 31% of youth admit to breaking one or more online safety or behavior rules (using inappropriate language, posting inappropriate pictures, posting personal information, or pretending to be someone they are not) (Grunwald Associates, "Creating & Connecting – Research and Guidelines on Online Social and Educational Networking," July 2007).
  
- Teens who use both social networking sites and admit to breaking online safety or behavior rules are significantly more likely to earn lower grades in school than teens who follow the rules when using social networking sites (Grunwald Associates, "Creating & Connecting – Research and Guidelines on Online Social and Educational Networking," July 2007).

### Facts about Parental Involvement/Influence on Teen's Online Behaviors:

- Seventy-three percent of tweens (ages 8 to 12) surveyed indicated that Mom and Dad had talked to them „a lot“ about Internet safety (COX Tween Internet Safety Survey, July 2008).

- 27% of fourth to sixth graders are completely unsupervised when they go online. 2% have seen nude photos, 2% have been asked sexual questions, and 1% have been asked to send a nude photo of themselves to someone online. (McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. "Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors," June 18, 2008).
- Only 30% of parents use filtering or monitoring software ((McQuade, Samuel III and Rochester Institute of Technology. "Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors," June 18, 2008).
- What should parents tell their children to protect them from online victimization?
  - Sexual relationships between adults and youth are criminal.
  - It is normal for teens to be curious about sex and experience sexual feelings, but dangerous to explore their curiosity online, especially through talking with unknown people.
  - There are people online who try to groom and seduce youth in order to exploit them to fulfill their own purposes (Woak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Ybarra. "Online Predators and Their Victims," March 2008).
- Parents of children under 18 who access the Internet estimate their children are online an average of three hours a week, however, children ages 8-17 admit to spending an average of seven hours online a week, and nearly a quarter (23%) report doing things online that their parents would not condone (Harris Interactive, "Kids Outsmart Parents When it Comes to the Internet," August 2007).
- 25% of teens say their parents know "little" or "nothing" about what they do online (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).
- 41% of teens report their parents talk to them "a lot" about Internet safety, and three out of four say their parents have talked to them in the past year about the potential dangers of posting personal info. The level of parental involvement is higher for younger teens and girls (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).
- Teens whose parents have talked to them "a lot" about Internet safety are more concerned about the risks of sharing personal info online than teens whose parents are less involved (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).
- Teens whose parents have talked to them "a lot" about online safety are less likely to consider meeting face to face with someone they met on the Internet (12% vs. 20%) (Teen Research Unlimited. "Cox Communications Teen Internet safety Survey Wave II," March 2007).
- 85% of parents of online teens say they have established rules about the kinds of personal information their child can share over the internet (Lenhart, Amanda and Maddox, Mary. "Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks – How Teens Manage their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace." April 18, 2007).
- 69% of parents say they have rules about how long their teen can spend online. (Lenhart, Amanda and Maddox, Mary. "Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks – How Teens Manage their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace." April 18, 2007).
- Only 47% of homes with teens ages 15 to 17 use filtering software. Parents with teens younger than 15 are much more likely to use filtering software, though it is beneficial to youth

of all ages (Lenhart, Amanda and Maddox, Mary. "Teens, Privacy, and Online Social Networks – How Teens Manage their Online Identities and Personal Information in the Age of MySpace." April 18, 2007).

### Facts about Teens and Cell Phones

- Next to clothing, teens say a cell phone tells the most about a person's social status or popularity, outranking jewelry, watches and shoes. A majority of teens (57 percent) view their cell phone as the key to their social life. (CTIA/Harris interactive: "A Generation Unplugged: Research Report." September 12, 2008).
- With nearly four out of every five teens (17 million) carrying a wireless device (a 40 percent increase since 2004), it's not surprising that six in ten teens (57 percent) credit mobility for improving their quality of life. Over half of the respondents (52 percent) agree the cell phone has become a new form of entertainment while 80 percent of teens surveyed said their cell phone provided a sense of security while on the go, confirming the cell phone has become their mobile safety net when needing a ride (79 percent), getting important information (51 percent), or just helping out someone in trouble (35 percent). (CTIA/Harris interactive: "A Generation Unplugged: Research Report." September 12, 2008).
- Texting is replacing talking among teens. Teens admitted spending nearly an equal amount of time talking as they do texting each month. The feature is so important to them that if texting was no longer an option, 47 percent of teens say their social life would end or be worsened – especially among females (54 percent compared to 40 percent of males). (CTIA/Harris interactive: "A Generation Unplugged: Research Report." September 12, 2008).
- 46% of 8 to 12 year olds have cell phones (Reardon, Marguerite. CNET.com. "Mobile Carriers See Opportunity in Tween Market," Sept 10, 2008).
- 20% of teens use their cell phones for social networking (Reardon, Marguerite. CNET.com. "Teens View Cell Phones as Essential," Sept. 15, 2008).

### Facts about Virtual Worlds and Online Gaming

- Virtual Worlds combine aspects of gaming, social networking, and communicating all in one online environment (eMarketer, September 2007).
- Fully 97% of teens ages 12-17 play computer, web, portable, or console games (Lenhart, Amanda. "Teens, Video Games and Civics: Teens' Gaming Experiences are Diverse and include Significant Social Interaction and Civic Engagement," Sept.16, 2008).
- Of teens who play games online with others:
  - 47% of teens play online games with people they know in their offline lives.
  - 27% of teens play online games with people they first met online.
  - 23% of teens play with both friends and family known in the offline world and people they met online (Lenhart, Amanda. "Teens, Video Games and Civics: Teens' Gaming Experiences are Diverse and include Significant Social Interaction and Civic Engagement," Sept.16, 2008).
- 73% of teens play games on a desktop or a laptop computer while 48% play on a cell phone or handheld organizer (Lenhart, Amanda. "Teens, Video Games and Civics: Teens' Gaming Experiences are Diverse and include Significant Social Interaction and Civic Engagement," Sept.16, 2008).

- The average age of players of online games is 26 (Nick Yee, [www.incredibleinternet.com](http://www.incredibleinternet.com)).
- 35% of gamers are under the age of 18. The greatest percentage of gamers (43%) are in the 19 to 49 age category (Nick Yee, [www.incredibleinternet.com](http://www.incredibleinternet.com)).
- 85% of gamers are male and 15% are female (Nick Yee, [www.incredibleinternet.com](http://www.incredibleinternet.com)).
- Currently advertisers spend \$15 million to advertise their goods and services within the virtual world environment (eMarketer, September 2007).
- In 2007, 24% of youth interacted in virtual worlds. It is estimated that 53% of youth will be active in virtual worlds by 2011 (eMarketer, September 2007).
- Pros of using virtual worlds include opportunities to have fun, make new friends, develop leadership skills, and cultivate a sense of accomplishment. Cons include the possibility that using a virtual world can be time consuming, monetarily costly, and may expose younger participants to harsh or abusive treatment by older participants (Nick Yee, [www.incredibleinternet.com](http://www.incredibleinternet.com)).
- As of August 2008, there were 95 virtual worlds active in the United States with 68 more in concept, development, or testing, all of which were designed for tweens or kids (Pham, Alex. Chicago Tribune. "Growth is Real in Virtual Worlds," September 22, 2008).