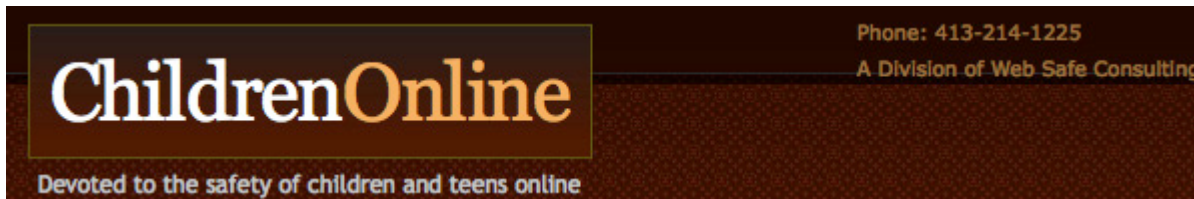


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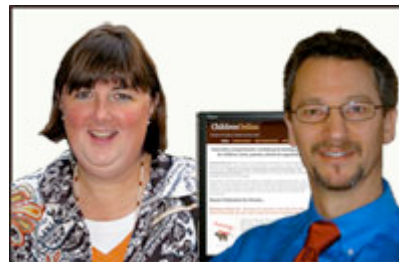
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**News on Parental Control Software:**

In our May, 2008 newsletter we described the various types of parental control software available to parents along with some recommendations. This year we are thrilled to refer our readers to an outstanding resource that didn't exist in 2008. It is David Burt's website [GetParentalControls.org](#) - the independent guide to online safety technology. Our readers will want to download David's [2010 Internet safety technology product guide](#). On David's

**Issue: #37****June 2010****37th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.**

Summer is upon us and our children are going to have a lot more free time available to them. It is likely that they will be spending more of their free time online. As a result, parents are looking for better ways to set boundaries for their children and monitor their children's online activities.



As parents and teachers both know, most children will try to meet our expectations when those expectations are clearly defined and the children know that they are being monitored. Clear and frequent conversations, combined with value statements such as "in our family we do not...", "I expect you to...", or "It is never OK to...", have an impact on a child's behavior.

As a part of *our* continuing education, it is also important to understand what are the most significant risks our children face online and how we might mitigate those risks. A recently published report to that end is worth our attention and comments though it does not address all of the risks our children face online, such as being targeted by fraudulent marketers and malware writers. The report was produced by the Online Safety and Technology Working Group (OSTWG) and released earlier this month. [The OSTWG report was commissioned](#) about a year ago by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The

website visitors can also find reviews on more than 40 parental control products.

### ***Related Resources***

[Full Report: Youth Safety on a Living Internet](#) from the Online Safety and Technology Working Group (June 4, 2010)

[Social Media and Young Adults - Summary of Findings](#) from the Pew Internet and American Life Project.

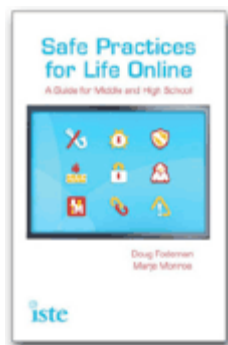
University of New Hampshire Crimes Against Children Research Center: [Internet Predator Stereotypes Debunked in New Study](#)

Rochester Institute of Technology: [A Survey of Internet and At-risk Behaviors](#)

## **INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM**

### **Safe Practices for Life Online**

Children Online has a



[OSTWG full report is available here](#) and is so valuable that it should be read by every school administration. Parents, too, will find reading it worth their effort.

Also, we're thrilled to have found an extremely valuable resource for parents that we've highlighted in the sidebar to the left. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Our telephone number for Children Online is 413-214-1225.

Best wishes,  
Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at [marjem@childrenonline.org](mailto:marjem@childrenonline.org) or [dougf@childrenonline.org](mailto:dougf@childrenonline.org) for information about our programs or consulting services.

### **Comments on Internet Safety Education and Parental Oversight**

To paraphrase the OSTWG report, we need to look at our children's safety not based on a particular Internet or cell phone technology but upon the harm that may arise from their use. The report groups safety into four categories:

**Physical safety** - freedom from physical harm

**Psychological safety** - freedom from cruelty, harassment, and exposure to potentially disturbing material<sup>5</sup>

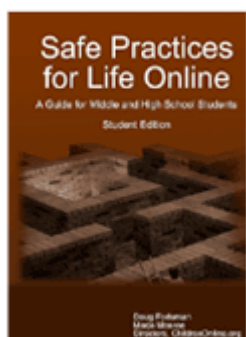
**Reputational and legal safety** - freedom from unwanted social, academic, professional, and legal consequences that could affect users for a lifetime

**Identity, property, and community safety** - freedom from theft of identity & property

In order for parents to protect their children, guide them to use age-appropriate Internet and cell phone technologies, AND guide their ethical/moral development as they use these powerful technologies, parents should employ a multi-layered approach:

- Provide Age-appropriate education ("scare tactics" don't work.) Parents are welcome to review our recommendations for children's and teen's use of technology, described in the [April, 2009 newsletter](#).

curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know"

sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page at ChildrenOnline.org](#) or go directly to our publisher's pages:

[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)  
[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

### About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough

- Set clear and consistent boundaries and expectations for their children's behavior
- Use parental control software to monitor, report, and provide structure to the boundaries they set
- Talk to their kids about life online. Talk to them, talk to them, talk to them!

In addition, schools need to do a better job of providing quality age-appropriate education that spirals through grade levels and adapts to children's changing use of the Internet and cell phones. Internet and cell phone technologies continue to change quickly, as does our children's use of them. A recent example of the changing face of technology is the release last week of Apple's new iPhone with real-time video chat capabilities (i.e. think The Jetson's video phone). Within two years we're likely to see this ability appear on many cell phones. Adults cannot possibly anticipate every technology and its impact on children. And children are themselves a moving target under the influence of new technologies.

In 1964, Canadian philosopher and futurist Marshall McLuhan said, "We shape our tools and thereafter our tools shape us." During the last half-decade children and teens have been increasingly moving away from just consuming information to creating it online. For example, the February 2010 report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that 73% of teens are using social networks, up from 55% in 2008. More and more children, not just teens, are creating and posting content online. Though there are risks for children and teens using social networks, data suggests that there is no increase in their risk for being victimized by online predators, a rare consequence that gets a disproportionate amount of media attention. But what the OSTWG and other researchers did discover was that **"bullying and harassment, most often by peers, are the most frequent threats that minors face, both online and offline"**. According to a study from the Rochester Institute of Technology, bullying may start as early as second grade. From the Crimes Against Children Research Center (CACRC) at the University of New Hampshire also comes a study concluding, "Youth identify most sexual solicitors as being other adolescents".

**understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.**

**Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at [ChildrenOnline.org](http://ChildrenOnline.org).**

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Doug Fodeman & Marje Monroe.  
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These, and other findings, raise a number of questions about what parents and educators may believe are the greatest threats to their children's safety online. Furthermore, according to the OSTWG report, not all children and teens share the same risks. It should come as no surprise that children and teens most at risk offline, are also most at risk online. Those children and teens who are dealing with physical and sexual abuse, eating disorders, divorce and parent separation, depression and other psychosocial problems are most at risk online.

It is clear that children and teens need greater educational opportunities to learn how to use Internet technologies wisely and carefully. **However, it is not clear to most parents and educators what are healthy and appropriate ages for children and teens to use various Internet and cell phone technologies.** These guidelines are missing from the equation of education and practice. And while educators and school administrators all agree on the value of teaching Internet safety skills, there is some disagreement as to how effectively these skills are currently being taught. There is also some question how effectively teachers are being trained to teach Internet safety, cyber-ethics and cyber-security. These are important questions for parents to ask of their children's schools and for schools to ask themselves. What makes up the Internet safety curriculum of your school and how is it implemented? Remember, children and teens are at much greater risk for being cyber-bullied, scammed by fraudulent ads, tricked into downloading malware, impacted negatively by their loss of privacy, or exposed to content for which they are not developmentally ready, than by contact with an online pedophile despite what the media would have us believe. Proper education, both at home and in school, can do a great deal to reduce children's and teen's risks. Given our increasing use of, and dependence on Internet and cell phone technologies, how can we provide anything less?