

# PROTECT EVERY CHILD

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS

## SECTION 4

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

# TECHNOLOGY

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT INTERNET SAFETY FOR KIDS

### GETTING THE WORD OUT

- Copy the participant guide. You will need to make one copy for each participant.
- Copy the bulletin insert. You will need to make one copy for every two bulletins. Cut the inserts in half and place in the church bulletins the week before the meeting.
- Recruit volunteers to hand out the participant guides at the door on the meeting day.
- Preview this session's DVD segment and meeting plan.
- In addition to the bulletin inserts, promote this "Internet Safety" series during announcement times, in the church newsletter, on the church Web site, through Sunday School class e-mails, and at any other opportunity. Use the following information to promote this series of programs:

Remember when your children thought you were so smart? Your influence was without question and your ability to protect your children from "questionable influences" was as easy as grabbing the remote control.

That's not the case anymore. Today's teens are masters of technology in a culture sadly short on restraint. Our children need our guidance and our encouragement when it comes to navigating the minefields of digital media.

Unfortunately, many parents and guardians are a little like dinosaurs when it comes to understanding and appreciating the ways teens communicate. But never has your presence and your input been more needed.

Keeping our children safe on the Internet is a big job, but it is a task well worth the effort.

You don't have to be a technology guru to help your child set healthy and safe limits on the Internet, you just have to be willing to learn and to ask questions. Come find out more!

### GETTING STARTED

- Opening – Welcome the group. Say: For the past three sessions we have talked about all types of issues regarding the Internet. This last session, called "Technology", will bring things together and leave us with some valuable resources. We will follow up with a short time of discussion.
- Prayer – Pray for our children and for the privilege of being parents. Pray that God would give us energy and open minds as we seek to learn new things about technology – all in an effort to be the parents He has called us to be.
- Pre-video comments – Say: As we've said before, this session focuses on technology – everything from file sharing to tech anxiety. Also included are some valuable Web sites for additional information.
- Show the "Technology" segment on the DVD.
- Allow a few minutes for participants to read through the participant guide.

### CHAT IT UP

- Do you have any rules in place in your home regarding what types of photos your children can post to their profiles? What types of guidelines do you think are appropriate?
- How do you handle the new technology and the learning curves that it creates?
- Is there anything you plan to do differently as a result of watching these programs?
- What information have you found to be the most helpful?

### CLOSE

Thank the group for coming. Remind them of your next meeting date and close with prayer.

# TECHNOLOGY

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Tech anxiety. It's the certainty that as soon as you figure out a new software program or gadget, a new one will hit the market. Parents generally dread the new learning curve – teens look forward to it with anticipation.

Teens see it as something to make hanging out with friends a little easier. And thanks to technology, "hanging out with friends" is not what it used to be. According to a 2006 survey, 45 percent of teens preferred to communicate with friends via IM outside of school while only 15 percent preferred to communicate face-to-face with friends. ([www.netsmartz.org/pdf/cox\\_teenurvey\\_may2006.pdf](http://www.netsmartz.org/pdf/cox_teenurvey_may2006.pdf)).

Keeping up with all the technology in your teen's room can be hard enough. Now you find out that it changes – often. Several years ago no one had heard of social networking and blogs. Now they are the primary mode of networking among millions of people.

It is a different world out there now. There is a definite shift from mass-communication driven media to people-generated media. Just look at YouTube, a popular site where videos can be uploaded and viewed. As of January 2009, it had 100 million viewers. Now anyone can be the star of their own show or a famous movie producer.

Remind your children that posting videos and pictures is fun and quick. It is also permanent. Many teens are oblivious to the fact that someone beyond their circle of friends would look at their photos online or at their videos on YouTube. Even pictures and videos once removed from a site are most likely alive and well on a hard drive somewhere.

Teach your children to be smart about what they share online and whom they share it with. While the Internet can be a wonderful resource, it can also seem a little surreal to teens. They may say things that they would not say face-to-face. Children need to understand that real world rules and values apply on the Internet as they do in real life.

Educate yourself with the technology your children want to use. Communicate with your children, not just in terms of rule and regulations, but let them know that you are interested in what's new and cool in their world of technology.

For advice and tips, talk to other parents and computer-savvy friends and relatives.

### HOW YOU CAN PRAY

Pray for wisdom and discernment as you try to guide your children. Ask the Lord to draw them closer to Him and to keep their eyes on paths of righteousness. Maybe the following verses can help guide your prayers as well:

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all time, having all that you need, you will abound in every good word." 2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV)

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

### HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Below is a list of helpful Web sites:

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)  
[www.netsmartz411.org](http://www.netsmartz411.org)  
[www.ncdoj.com](http://www.ncdoj.com)  
[www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov)  
[www.jkeepsafe.org](http://www.jkeepsafe.org)  
[www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org)  
[www.getnetwise.com](http://www.getnetwise.com)  
[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)  
[www.protecteverychild.org](http://www.protecteverychild.org)  
[www.netfamilynews.org](http://www.netfamilynews.org)

Another important step in protecting your children on the Internet is coming up with a set of family rules. Check out the sample from the North Carolina Department of Justice Web site ([www.ncdoj.com](http://www.ncdoj.com)).

### SAMPLE FAMILY RULES

Using the computer is a privilege. In order to enjoy this privilege and use the computer, we agree to follow these rules:

- Computer use is not confidential, and we do not hide what we are doing on the computer.
- In our family, we get permission to access the Internet, and we use our personal login.

# TECHNOLOGY

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- We visit Web sites that are appropriate for our age, and we do not visit Web sites or access information that are “off limits” for us.
- We don't send or post photos or personal information without permission, and we will tell our parents about any online messages we receive that make us uncomfortable.
- We share an e-mail account with our parents. We will not open or use any other e-mail accounts.
- We do not enter chat rooms.
- We can go online between the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Time on the computer is limited to \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s) per day.
- Time on the Internet is limited to \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s) per day.
- Instant messaging is only allowed with people we already know. We will provide our parents with a current list of our “buddies.”
- We do not respond to messages from people we do not know.
- These rules apply to our home computer and all other computers we use.