

Brittany

The following article is based on a compilation of several real stories about Internet safety issues.

Most teenagers and young adults these days have been online. Certainly there are plenty of good reasons to use the Internet—hanging out with friends, doing research, and playing games. Unfortunately, there is increasing danger involved in getting online.

Take Brittany for example. Brittany was a young teenager. She liked to hang out, play softball, and chat on the Internet—especially with Jason, the friend she had met while online. Even though they had never met in person, she just knew that Jason was her soul mate. He liked everything she liked, and they could always talk about softball. He knew her team number, and she had described the new uniforms to him.

Jason had reminded Brittany about being careful; to be careful about giving out personal information online—he cared about her and wanted her to be safe. As a matter of fact, he had reminded her so often that she tended to tune him out. To her way of thinking, it wasn't like she chatted with anyone she didn't know! Besides, she never gave out her home address or phone number.

Brittany felt safe online. However, she wasn't fully aware of all of the dangers out there. Even without sharing her address, Brittany had supplied Jason with enough information in their conversations for him to be able to find her offline. And more importantly, Jason had built a trusting relationship with her, even though they had never met.

Fortunately, Brittany's friend was, in reality, a 35-year-old law-enforcement officer who was involved with the prevention of Internet crimes. Establishing an Internet relationship with Brittany was used to show how easy it is for people on the Internet to get information that can potentially put others, especially young people, in danger. Demonstrations like this one have been used across the country to show that only until you know what the dangers are how to protect yourself can you be assured that you will have a great time online and still be safe.