

Expert Group - Online Interaction

Directions: In your expert group, read and discuss the information provided on this reference sheet. When finished, brainstorm at least two rules, which represent the information you have learned. Remember: You are responsible for becoming the expert on this topic. You will be required to share this information with your initial group.

The Web

These days, it's difficult to get your schoolwork done without using an Internet search engine. There are lots of great sites on the Web with useful information. You can find books, games, and pictures—anything you want. However, there are risks associated with searching the Internet.

Watch out for . . .

- **Inappropriate Sites** – There are some sites you should not go to. They can be inappropriate, hate-filled, or upsetting. When you accidentally come across a site you know you shouldn't be in, close out of it quickly. Click on the X in the upper right-hand corner of the screen, or if you still have trouble, try logging off completely or rebooting.
- **Faulty-Information Sites** – Don't trust everything you read without double-checking and checking references.
- **Private Information** – Some Web sites ask you for private information before you can access their stuff. Don't give it out, and ask your parents if you have further questions about it.
- **Your Own Web Site** – Many teens now have their own Web sites. However, you have to be careful about what information you display.

E-Mail

Watch out for . . .

- **Spamming** – Many companies advertise via e-mail. They try to entice you to purchase items, visit inappropriate sites, etc. Delete these e-mails.
- Be careful when you reply to an e-mail. You are including your e-mail address, and you don't know where it will go from there.
- Inappropriate, offensive, angry e-mail should be reported to your Internet provider.
- Remember: The sender of an e-mail may not be someone you know. Don't send personal information, photographs, etc.

Chatting and IM

Chatting and instant messaging (IM) allows you to engage in real-time “conversation” with people around the world. You type what you want to say, and then everyone can see it. Some chat rooms have specific interests, such as an actor or music group. Some chat rooms are moderated, meaning there are people watching the conversation who step in to guide or enforce rules.

The monitor can’t, however, prevent you from going off to a private chat area with a person who might do you harm or keep you from typing information that could put you in danger.

Be Safe.

- Keep online interaction online. Don’t agree to meet or phone people met online.
- Don’t give out personal information. Be careful about indirectly saying too much, such as naming a school mascot, game times, etc. Eventually, you will have said enough.
- Keep your parents or guardians informed of online interaction.
- Use chat rooms that are moderated.
- Be suspicious of someone who wants to be your friend and tries to turn you against your parents, teachers, or friends. That’s not what friendship is all about.
- Private chats aren’t always private. When you meet offline friends online in a private chat room, be careful. Others can lurk in your conversation—listen to private conversations between you and your known friends.

Social Networking

Social Sites, Newsgroups, Forums, Blogs, and Bulletin Boards

Social-networking sites, as well as traditional online forums and newsgroups, are all places where you can read posted files, download or upload files, or post your own messages. Posted messages remain there even after you leave. You can find an individual or a group on almost any topic, and they are a great way to get involved in an area of interest.

THINK before you POST.

- The biggest risk is not including personal information in postings. Don’t reveal anything identifying about yourself.
- Realize that by posting to some types of bulletin boards, you are making your e-mail address public.
- Groups that are illegal or want to spread hateful messages may try to get you involved if you post contact information.
- Realize that anything you post online may be difficult to undo.