

Expert Group - Consequences

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.

Introduction

People tend to feel invincible and protected when they are on the Internet. They feel safe and secure because they are sitting at a computer, safe and sound in their home. It is difficult for them to imagine all the possible dangers lurking out there. However, there are consequences for lax behavior on the Web. Some are annoying; others are quite serious and dangerous.

Possible consequences

- Many exchange photos with people they have met online. This is dangerous for two reasons: It allows the other person to recognize you, and you lose control over how your photo might be used or altered by another person. You might not like what happens and be powerless to do anything about it. For example: A photo of your face could be placed on another person's body, etc.
- When you freely use your e-mail address, you are advertising to others that this is a valid address to e-mail to. The likelihood for spam e-mail or other unwanted mailings increases dramatically.
- Many people chat and instant message online. Do you know that anyone can access a chat and anyone can search and look at a chat or IM profile? What are you advertising to total strangers? The more information you give freely to others, the more tools they have to break down your defenses. You open yourself up to cyber stalking, harassment, and other types of victimization by someone who may want to harm you.
- When you post something on an online bulletin board, you cannot erase it. Whatever is written is there for everyone to see, whenever they want to see it. This can lead to embarrassment or loss of privacy.
- Entering a credit-card number and/or social-security number, name, and address information, etc., on an unsecured Internet site can lead to monetary theft and worse: identity theft.

When surfing the Internet, chatting, or e-mailing, stay safe by remembering:

- Never give out your first or last name, your parents' names, your home address, your phone number, your birth date, etc.
- Don't tell anyone your password.
- Be careful to whom you tell your screen name and user ID.
- To prevent SPAM, use a different screen name from your e-mail address. View a Web site's privacy policy to understand how they can use the information you give them.
- Ask for parental permission before giving information out.
- You should be able to participate in most online activities without giving out information.
- Log off if personal information is asked for.
- When you receive an e-mail that is inappropriate, delete it and report it. Don't ask to be removed or click on the removal button—that informs spammers that yours is a real e-mail address, and they will send more!
- Don't give out other people's names or e-mail addresses—you want to protect them also.
- Don't register for contests or fill out information to download software.
- Understand that people aren't always who they claim to be. Don't give out information to anyone claiming to be from the Internet company, etc.
- E-mail is not always private, so don't put anything in there you would not want to see broadcasted.