



## Family Insider ~ Scams, Hoaxes, and Urban Legends

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*“We spend the first 12 months of our children’s lives teaching them to walk and talk, and the next 12 telling them to sit down and shut up.”*

*- Phyllis Diller*

It’s not easy to determine whether information on the Internet is legitimate or correct. Most Internet users have at some time received spam (in e-mails) or spim (in instant messages), or have visited sites concerning products that don’t really exist, or containing mythical news stories, misleading appeals for financial help, false virus alerts, or other inaccurate or deceitful information.

You know the saying, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn’t true.” That statement most often rings true, offline and online.

Scams intentionally mislead you with an offer for a free or discounted item, service or monetary gain. The desire to gain something for nothing, to get an item before it is offered to the general public, or to get something at a reduced price causes a recipient’s greed to overtake his or her common sense. Unfortunately, these e-mail offers are often “phishing” e-mails attempting to obtain your credit card information and steal your identity by linking you to false Web sites that appear legitimate (such as a bank), or by convincing you to disclose your information to update your accounts, etc. One such scam is the “PayPal” scam. Another popular type of e-mail scam is the “request for help” e-mail, which offers a reward in return for the recipient helping the sender with a task or problem. The “Nigerian Scam” promises a hefty percentage of a wealthy foreigner’s fortune as a reward for helping move millions of dollars from his homeland to another bank.

On the flip side of that well-known statement is another: “If it sounds too outlandish to be true, it probably isn’t true.”

Each day millions of Internet users receive urban legend or hoax e-mails. Urban legends are those stories distributed by e-mail, which may or may not be



true, but are often distorted, exaggerated, or sensationalized—such as the e-mail circulated about “organ harvesters” who were allegedly kidnapping, drugging, and stealing body parts from their victims. Hoaxes play on our need to help people or appeal to our desire to obtain items for free, at a reduced price, or that are pre-released. Who wouldn’t want to help a poor little girl who is about to die from cancer, warn your family and friends about criminals using a new carjacking scheme, or get free meals from Applebee’s?

Most likely you will, if you haven’t already, receive a scam, hoax, or urban legend e-mail. Before forwarding, verify the source and legitimacy of the information contained. There are several Web sites where you can check the legitimacy of an e-mail you believe to be a scam, urban legend, or a hoax, including **Snopes**, **Trend Micro**, and **HOAX BUSTERS**. When in doubt, don’t send it out!

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### NAC Tracks

Do you have rules in your home on how to deal with spam or phishing?

Yes or No

**Vote here**




## Family Insider ~ Scams, Hoaxes, and Urban Legends

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If you receive an offer via e-mail from someone claiming to need your help getting money out of Nigeria—or any other country, for that matter—forward it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov). For a list of the top 12 e-mail scams, check out the FTC's list at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/doznalrt.htm>.

Remember, if you must forward information contained in an e-mail, always cut and paste the specific information you

want to share (unless the entire content is vital, as in an ongoing conversation), and remove the multiple carriage returns (>>) that often appear, as well as any other specific information, like e-mail addresses, names, etc. Doing this will ensure that the e-mail addresses of everyone who has sent and/or received that particular e-mail will not be visible to future recipients. 

## Tech Tip

**Q:** My daughter has been receiving hurtful instant messages from a girl with whom she used to be friends. How can we block this annoying user? Also, is there a way to block IMs from users she doesn't know? Thanks for your help.

**A:** This fairly common issue in which you no longer wish to converse with people you've added to your buddy list is easily remedied. It is also a good idea to block unknown users from contacting you. Here are some steps you can take with two popular versions of IM software.

### If you are using AIM:

#### To block messages from an individual:

1. In the "Instant Message" window, click the "Block" button.
2. Click "OK" to confirm that you want to block the specific user.

#### To control who can send you instant messages:

1. In the "Buddy List" window, click "My AIM" followed by "Edit Options" then "Edit Preferences."
2. From the left Category menu, click "Privacy."
3. Select your preferences for who can exchange instant messages with you (allow only people on your "Buddy List"). When you select this preference, only people whose screen names you have

added to your "Buddy List" window can see that you are online and send you instant messages. Finally, click "OK."


### If you are using MSN:

#### To block messages from an individual:

1. Click "Block" on the toolbar in the conversation window.
2. If you are in a conversation with multiple people, click "Block" and then click the name of the person you want to block.

#### To block messages from everyone not on your contact list or on your "My Allow List":

1. In the "Messenger" main window, click the "Tools" menu, click "Options," and then click the "Privacy" tab.
2. Under "My Allow List," click "All Others," and then click "Block."
3. All others move to your "Block" list. This forces anyone who wants to send you messages to add you to their own contact list.

If you are using a program other than AIM or MSN, you can most likely obtain details on blocking a user by contacting the product's support section of their Web site or by e-mailing them directly. 



Site  
Spotlight

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## Ask an Expert ~ Internet Victim Characteristics



**Q:** How do I know if my child is at risk of becoming a victim online?

**A:** Few children are exempt from being at-risk online. However, most Internet-related victims have some characteristics in common.

Does your child fit the profile of a typical Internet-related victim? Take a look at the following questions, and then discuss them with your child.

- Is your child between the ages of 11 and 15 years old?
- Is your child a loner?
- Does your child spend a lot of time online (more than 1 1/2 hours a day)?
- Is your child naive or easily influenced?
- Does your child display particularly risky or rebellious behavior?
- Does your child participate in few activities offline, such as sports or reading, or community or church activities?
- Is your child secretive about his or her Internet activities (minimizes the screen when you are present, doesn't talk about online friends, etc.)
- Does he or she use instant messengers? (Do you know with whom they are chatting?)
- Does your child have a computer in his or her bedroom?
- Does he or she have a Web site, blog, or personal profile online?
- Does he or she receive phone calls, mail, or gifts from

people you don't know?

- Does your child have a cell phone or other wireless device that can be used to communicate with someone without your knowledge?
- Has your child's behavior changed recently? (Has something changed that you can't put your finger on?)

Trust your gut!

Remember that even if these characteristics don't seem to define your child, you still need to be on guard; not all victims fit the typical profile. Most importantly, keep the lines of communication with your child open. Involve yourself in your child's online experiences, and teach him or her how to recognize and respond appropriately to online dangers.



## In Action ~ New Game Show

I have created a simple way to turn your i-SAFE parent night into the must-attend event of the month! Remember the old Newlywed Game? Well, I came up with the Newlyweb Game!

A big problem most parents run into on parent nights is what to do with the kids? Bring them to the presentation, because they are your teammates! To start, I ask each team five questions related to the Internet. One example: "What is your child's IM name?" You'd be surprised how many parents don't know the answer. Some questions are easy, some are hard, but all are designed to open the lines of communication between teammates. Remember the i-SAFE study:

- 87 percent of parents say there are rules for their kids Internet use.
- 36 percent of students say there are no rules for their Internet use.

This parent night bridges that digital divide. The bonus question: "What keys do you use to view the history of Internet use on your computer?" Since I started in 2004, only one parent has been able to answer that question!

Show i-SAFE videos in between rounds, have a small gift for the winner, and one word will describe your i-SAFE parent night—whoopee! Good luck.

Shannan,  
Georgia




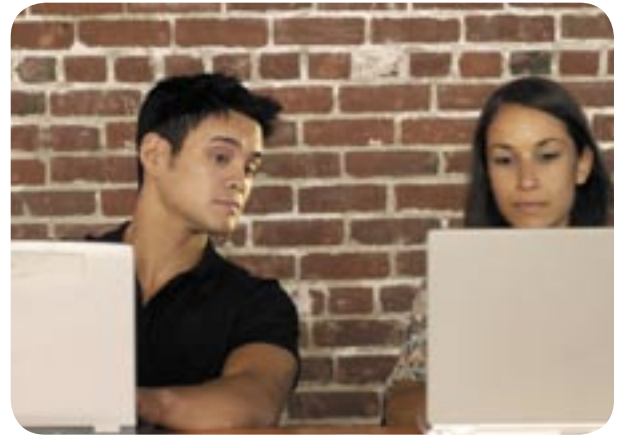
## Did You Know?

### The Gender Gap

The times they are a changing—but we're pretty sure this is not what Dylan had in mind. New studies show women are catching up with men online. Sixty-eight percent of men and 66 percent of women go online. However, what they do once they log on is as different as the sexes themselves.

A recent Pew Internet and American Life Project surveyed more than 20,000 men and women over five years. They found that men go online to enjoy their hobbies, read, take classes, or download music or software, while women use the Internet for nurturing relationships through e-mail. Women enjoy sharing stories, discussing plans, and asking for advice through e-mail. Men simply use it for work-related activities or forwarding jokes!


One thing men and women have in common when it comes to Internet use: Both are more likely to use it if they have kids. We all know many of those kids are teaching their parents how to navigate the Internet. Don't be one of those parents! Check out the i-PARENT section of the i-SAFE Web site ([http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=op&sub\\_id=2](http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=op&sub_id=2)) and find out how you can reverse the roles and teach your kids a thing or two. 



### MySpace Challenger

Is MySpace about to become soooooo last year (as kids say)? Maybe, maybe not. But the largest college online networking site is now open to high school students. And all it takes for you to register is an e-mail that ends in .edu.

Facebook was created in February 2004 by three Harvard students for their campus. Fast-forward to today, and the site hosts 835 institutions of higher learning and more than four million accounts across the United States.

Facebook is a site much like MySpace—create a profile, post a picture, restrict stranger access (or not), etc. However, unlike MySpace, Facebook segregates. Cofounder Mark Zuckerberg recently said: “Nobody in high school can search for you, see your profile, or even send you a message.” Even so, it is one more site for parents to keep their eyes on. 


### Tech Winners in Sin City

The New Year kicked off with the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. What better place to show off glitzy new tech gadgets on which companies are gambling their futures?

Not familiar with the CES? This year it had 2500 exhibitors from 110 countries.

Representatives from CNET (an Internet-based media company specializing in product reviews, game trailers, and more) had the enviable challenge of working in Sin City during the CES. And unlike most, they found winners:

**Best in Show: Creative Zen Vision: M.** According to CNET, “. . . brighter screen, better battery life, and more features . . .” than the iPod. It has voice recorder, FM tuner, video, 30GB, and sells for \$330.

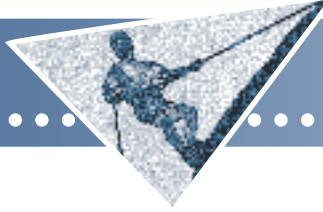
**People's Voice: Pioneer Inno.** It is a stand-alone player/recorder for XM Satellite Radio that can record up to 50 hours of programming. According to CNET, “Even better, you can use the Inno as an MP3 player.” It was the fans clear choice. 

## In Your Neighborhood

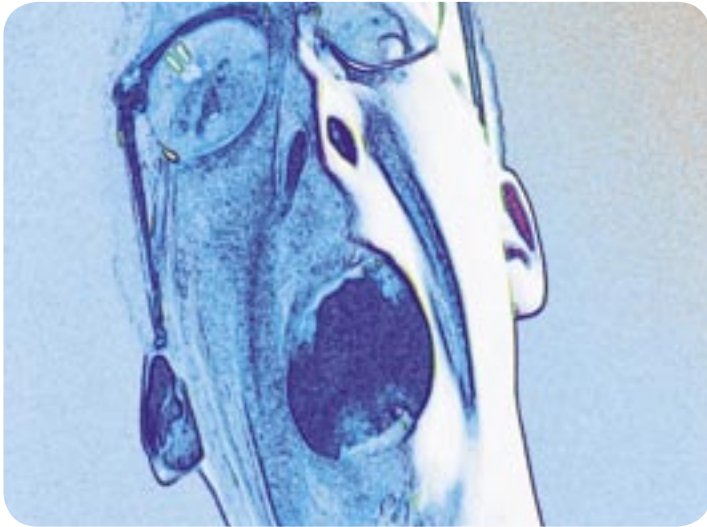


Everyday there are many i-SAFE America events going on across the country. We've made it easy for you to get involved and help spread the message of Internet safety to your peers and your community. Simply check out our “Calendar of Events” at [http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=ai&sub\\_id=3](http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=ai&sub_id=3) to find an event near you.

## The Power of One



### Hate Sites




When you wander around the World Wide Web, it can be intimidating, especially with the hate sites that exist. I stumbled upon one, and it made me wonder how many were out there. The Hate Directory is "... an aid in identifying and tracking the proliferation of hate oriented use of the Internet. . . ." (It can be found at <http://www.bcpl.net/~rfrankli>

[/hatedir.htm](#).) After two pages of explanation, there are about 120 pages of hate sites and hate groups, and only one page of sites dedicated to "Combating Hate on the Net"

A hate site is a place where people can express themselves. Though the content may be hateful and negative to others, these Web sites are protected by the First Amendment. Some examples of groups that have hate sites include Black Separatists, the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, Racist Skinheads, Christian Identity, and Neo-Confederates.

Remember, there are many solutions to these problems. i-SAFE America creates awareness about internet safety, including hate sites, and is taking an active role in educating communities. The organization has influenced me and many other young adults to be proactive.

Another solution is to create an antihate Web site (remember the lonely page in The Hate Directory). By making a Web site like this, you are attempting to fight off the ones that create and promote hate. Ignoring these sites will not make them go away. People should discuss hate sites to learn about all that is out there on the World Wide Web. 

*Gabby, Point Loma, CA*

## Internet Safety Tip for Parents




Respect your child's privacy. There is an ethical line drawn when it comes to a child's privacy. It is a line not defined by i-SAFE but by each family or even each parent. Spector Pro. eBlaster. Spy Agent. P.C. Police. Key Katcher. These are just some of the many different ways to track loved ones' travels on the World Wide Web. So what was that about privacy again?

Privacy is much like i-SAFE's curriculum—it is age-appropriate. Obviously the trust you place in your 17-year-old on the Internet is different than that placed in your 6-year-old. And we all know age is different from child to child, as some 10-year-olds are more mature than others. If you know your child, then you will know how much respect to give his or her privacy. But before you make a decision, consider these numbers about student behavior from recent i-SAFE surveys:

- 53 percent like being alone when "surfing" the Internet.
- 39 percent have given out personal information online (entering contests, playing online games, or signing up for Web sites).
- 31 percent have chatted or instant messaged someone on the Internet who they have not met face to face.
- 13 percent are willing to meet face to face with someone new who they met on the Internet.

When it comes to Internet safety, you can never be too careful. Respect your children's privacy—but not to the point of endangering them through neglect.

Good luck! 





## Get Involved

### Select a Director

The process of creating an i-PARENT Board begins by selecting a director. It is the first step *and* the most important.

Protecting the children of the community is not a task to be taken lightly, and it requires a proven leader. The director is responsible for building a team, creating events, and working with everyone in the community.

If this is you, then go for it! If this is not you, find a person in your community who people will follow, and help that person—he or she can't do it alone. And remember the words of noted ethicist Robert K. Greenleaf: "Good leaders must first become good servants."

*\*If you have questions, contact [parents@isafe.org](mailto:parents@isafe.org).*

## Team-Up with i-SAFE

Currently i-SAFE has reached over 1 million students with Internet safety information. By providing many free materials, programs and educational videos, students are learning how to make positive choices when challenged with today's technology. Not only do students learning to protect themselves against predators, but they are learning how to make decisions regarding intellectual property, identity theft, and more.

i-SAFE strives to always provide your family with the most current information regarding the issues youth face today on the Internet. In order to bring our programs and materials to your community and your home, we rely upon donations.

We are grateful if you, or perhaps someone you know, can assist i-SAFE in educating as many children as possible. Since i-SAFE is a 501(c)(3) corporation, your donations to us are fully tax deductible.

To donate you can e-mail [donations@isafe.org](mailto:donations@isafe.org) or go to [http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=gi&sub\\_id=2](http://www.isafe.org/channels/sub.php?ch=gi&sub_id=2).

The series of i-SAFE newsletters also includes the *i-EDUCATOR Times* and *Kewl Timez* (for students). We encourage you to read the others and ask you to use the main article to initiate discussion and action with your students and your community.

## About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE America Inc. is the leader in Internet safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower youth to make their Internet experiences safe and responsible. The goal is to educate students on how to avoid dangerous, inappropriate, or unlawful online behavior. i-SAFE accomplishes this through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. It is the only Internet safety foundation to combine these elements. [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)

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## We Value Your Input

Do you have a question or a comment about an article? Perhaps you have a story you wish to share with other readers. Do you know somebody whose story will inspire others to get involved? Whatever the case, we would like to know. Please e-mail us at [editor@isafe.org](mailto:editor@isafe.org) with questions, comments, or contributions. If snail mail is your preference, **send written correspondence to:**

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