



>> Stay In Touch Safely

It's summer, my favorite time of the year!! I love going to the beach with friends and hanging out at that famous pizza place. I can't wait!!

This summer is going to be different than in the past, though. You see, last year I moved from the place where I grew up. It was a small town where everyone knows each other, so when I moved, it was really hard to keep in touch with my friends.

One of the ways I used to keep in touch with my friends was through an online social-networking Web site. Everyone told me it wasn't safe, but I didn't pay attention to them. It was the only way I could keep in touch with my friends, so it didn't bother me what other people said . . . until the day I was chatting online with my best friend and this guy logged in to my Web page and began asking me questions through instant messaging. At first it didn't bother me because it wasn't the first time a stranger wanted to know something about me. Everyone in my social group seemed very friendly, so it didn't seem wrong. I plainly answered his questions and returned attention to my friend. The next day the same thing happened. He began with a couple more questions, but this time they seemed more personal. As he asked me things like,



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"Do you get along with your parents" or "Do your parents treat you badly," things began to feel strange. I quickly realized that I had to stop chatting with this person.

I began to ignore him in the chat room and used all of the safety tips my social group had provided me. Weeks passed, and that seemed to get rid of the problem. I thought everything had worked out. When I entered the chat room one day, he was there and asked me, "Why were you only online for 20 minutes yesterday?" That's when I realized he had been watching me. I was really scared and wanted to tell

Site Spotlight

The National Gallery of Art Kids site, at <http://www.nga.gov/kids/kids.htm>, features interactive art adventures where you can learn about works of art from medieval to the present time, create online artwork in the art gallery, and enjoy an animated musical story.

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someone, but I thought that if I did, my parents would take my computer away, and I really didn't want that! After this incident occurred, I got out of that social group and decided to e-mail my friends instead. That summer, I learned how dangerous the Internet can be if you don't use it wisely!

Now I know this summer will be different. I will make better choices because I now know how to stay safe online. The experience last year helped me prevent those types of situations. I still use the Internet to talk to my friends, but now I use "Yahoo Messenger." It's cool, safe, and fun. I can only talk to people who have asked for approval, meaning I have to know them, while still enjoying a lot of cool things like games. I also use my e-mail once in awhile because it's so simple to use. There are so many ways to stay safe online. Kids like you and me just need to take the time to research and find them. Visit <http://xblock.isafe.org/> for one of the safest teen sites around. Here are some other cool sites I visit: www.sparknotes.com, www.a-teens.com, www.yahoo.com, and www.mtv.com.

We Welcome Your Input

If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter or tell us your story, please contact us at:

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MISSION: i-SAFE is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences.