

# Pointers For Parents

## Safe Surfing On The Web: A Parent's Guide

(NAPSA)—Knowing what your kids are up to online can help protect them from identity theft, cyber strangers and other potential pitfalls of the Web.

Yet a recent report, the Norton Online Living Report, conducted by Harris Interactive for Symantec, found that many parents are disconnected when it comes to understanding their children's Internet use—and only a third of parents worldwide set parental controls and monitor their children's online activities.

In fact, the findings indicate that American parents think their kids are online two hours a month. In reality, kids report spending 20 hours a month online.

The Norton Online Living Report by Symantec, makers of Norton security software, questioned parents and children in eight countries. It also revealed that 41 percent of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 years old agree that their parents have no idea what they are looking at online. Here's what kids said they were up to on the Internet:

• **Making Friends**—About a third of U.S. online children ages 8 to 17 have made friends online. That percentage increases as kids grow older, with 50 percent of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 reporting they have made friends with people online. One in three U.S. children report that they prefer to spend time with their online friends the same amount or more than their offline friends.

• **Social Networking**—Seventy-six percent of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 years old “constantly,” “frequently” or “some-



**About a third of kids ages 8 to 13 who surf the Web have made friends online.**

times” visit social networking sites. Globally, about half of boys and girls visit social networking sites—and it seems kids are taking after their parents. Forty-seven percent of U.S. parents “constantly,” “frequently” or “sometimes” use social networks, while 46 percent of U.S. children report the same.

• **Shopping Online**—About one in three U.S. children report being “very confident” or “confident” in shopping online.

• **Getting Requests For Personal Information**—About four in 10 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 have received an online request for personal information.

### Safe Surfing

Perhaps most alarming is the disconnect between kids and adults when it comes to possible Web-based dangers. Sixteen percent of U.S. children report having been approached online by a stranger. However, U.S. adults believe that number to be just 6 percent.

“This report clearly demon-

strates a digital divide between parents and their cyber-savvy children,” says Marian Merritt, Internet safety advocate at Symantec. “We’ve always taught our children not to talk to strangers in the offline world, and now we must teach our children how to safely exist in an online world filled with strangers.”

Merritt offers more information at her Norton Family Resources Web site [www.norton.com/familyresources](http://www.norton.com/familyresources). The site lets you e-mail Merritt with questions and stories. It also includes tips and information on Web-based safety issues, from securing your home network to cyber bullying, as well as a Family Online Safety Guide that offers these tips:

- Limit approved Web sites and hours spent online.
- Set high-security settings with browser, membership and social networking sites.
- Install and maintain Internet security software and parental controls.
- Use parental controls to limit the Web sites your children can visit.
- Monitor your child's computer use and sit with him when he's online.
- Talk about protecting private information (name, phone number, etc.) and never sharing passwords with friends.

### Learning More

To find out how much you know about the Internet and online safety, visit [www.cybersmackdown.com](http://www.cybersmackdown.com). To learn more about the survey and to check out some Web-based videos, go to [www.norton.com/onlineliving](http://www.norton.com/onlineliving).