



INTERNET SAFETY TIPS



Simple Precautions Make Shopping, Surfing Safer

(NAPSA)—Kyle Buckman and Karen Woolbright don't share much in common. He's a single guy. She's a mother of five. But they've developed a similar wariness for the Internet.

Buckman no longer purchases over the Internet since his credit card number was intercepted online and was used by someone else. "I don't want to offer myself up again," he said. Woolbright began restricting her kids from searching the Web because of the risk of adult content and cyberstalkers. "I'm probably being over-protective," she said. "But I want to keep my kids safe."

Privacy experts say prudence is good, but that parents and consumers can greatly reduce the chances of becoming a victim by developing safe surfing habits.

"The Internet need not be a scary place," said Richard Purcell, director of Corporate Privacy for Microsoft Corp. "By taking the right precautions, people can feel much more confident in the online safety of their kids and their personal information."

Here are some methods that experts suggest for increasing privacy online:

- Review Web site privacy policies before disclosing personal information.

- Configure settings on your Web browser Tools/Internet Options security tab to mark as "trusted" those Web sites with which you feel safe sharing information. You can also use this tab to control the placing of "cookies"—tiny bits of code that facilitate Web page customization and allow Web sites to track your online patterns and preferences without your knowledge.

- Be sure retail Web sites display an on-screen padlock symbol. This indicates the site uses encryption technology to protect transmitted information.



Karen Woolbright (right) works with her 12-year-old daughter, Ashley, on the family computer. Woolbright restricts her children's Internet use because she worries about them finding inappropriate Web sites. Online privacy experts say parents can protect their families online by following a few practical precautions.

- Create a "passport" for easier online shopping and to secure personal information when traveling among Web sites. Kids Passport (<http://kids.passport.com/>) restricts the information sites collect on kids.

- Place the family computer where adults can monitor use.

- Use Web sites such as <http://www.getnetwise.org/> that explain and locate software to control children's use of the Internet.

- Obtain contact information (such as phone number and address) from Web sites before providing credit card information. This ensures the business is legitimate and simplifies returns.

- Maintain updated firewall software, such as Black Ice or Zone Alarm, to prevent snoops from accessing personal information. Firewall software can be obtained through download from the Web or at a computer supply retail establishment.

Visit <http://www.microsoft.com/safeinternet> for additional information.