

FACTS & FIGURES

Understanding How The Internet Affects Children

(NAPSA)—Between surfing the Internet, visiting chat rooms and sending text messages, children spend a great deal of time in cyberspace—and it's up to parents to make sure their kids spend that time safely. Consider the following statistics:

- Approximately 90 percent of children ages 8 to 16 have viewed pornography on the Internet.
- Approximately 70 percent of sexual advances on the Internet happen while children use a home computer.
- Only 25 percent of children will tell a parent about an online encounter with a sexual predator.
- An alarming 75 percent of children willingly share personal information about themselves over the Internet in exchange for goods or services.

In addition, approximately 75 percent of online teenagers use instant messaging (IM). Why is this important for parents? Because 37 percent of online teens have used IM to write something they would not have said in person.

There are both personal and technological dangers associated with a child's Internet use. Not only might a child access Web sites containing inappropriate material, but sometimes the simple act of visiting a malicious Web site can cause spyware, worms or other digital threats to be downloaded and installed on your computer.

Protecting children should be a parent's primary concern. There are several ways to accomplish this. First, establish boundaries. Decide what Web sites and con-



Good news: There's a new guide that can help parents monitor Internet safety for their children.

tent you feel comfortable letting your children see, then take steps to filter or block everything else. You can find out what sites your children have visited by reviewing their Internet history.

Internet Explorer contains a feature called the Content Advisor that enables parents to control the Web content that children see. Similar to the “V-chip” found in many new televisions, the Content Advisor uses a rating system to help you set the level of language, nudity, sex and violence that is acceptable in your home.

These tips come from the free publication “A Parents’ Guide to Internet Safety” developed by Geeks On Call—a national company providing on-site computer services. The Parents’ Guide is part of an educational program called “Kids Club” created by Geeks On Call to teach children and parents about Internet safety and to donate money to local schools. To download the free Parents’ Guide or to learn more about Kids Club, visit www.geeksoncall.com/kidsclub.