

Pointers For Parents

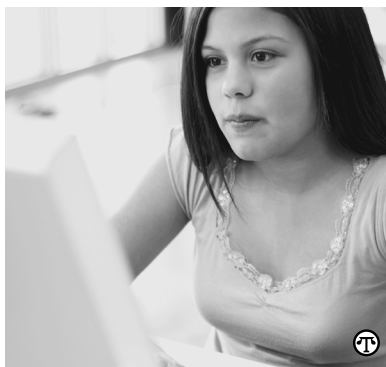
Internet Safety Tools For Families

(NAPSA)—While most parents and guardians wouldn't give an unfamiliar person their home address, their teenagers might provide this information and more to people they don't know over the Internet. Every day, teens and young adults use social networking Web sites, chat rooms and personal blogs to share unique information about themselves, but also personal information that could put them at risk of being approached by someone who means them harm.

Now, parents, guardians and mentors have a way to help protect the younger people in their lives from falling victim to these online risks. The 2 SMRT 4U Family/Educator Toolbox provides adults with online resources so they can learn about highly popular social networking sites and engage youth in an important dialogue about the potential risks of posting too much information online.

The Toolbox is a new component from the 2 SMRT 4U campaign, a national Internet safety awareness initiative created by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and in support of the U.S. Attorney General's Project Safe Childhood. Since its launch in November 2006, the campaign has reached hundreds of thousands of teens, tweens and young adults with helpful do's and don'ts for navigating and posting on Internet sites. The campaign Web site, 2SMRT4U.com, has logged more than 419,040 requests for the free 2 SMRT 4U ring, a tangible reminder for teens to "Type smart. Post wisely."

A recent survey commissioned by NCMEC and conducted by the University of New Hampshire found that 34 percent of teens posted their real names, telephone numbers or home addresses online. Once posted on the Inter-



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net, this information, as well as information or photos that reveal local sports teams, activities or locations unique to the teen, is live in cyberspace for anyone to see and act on.

Designed to help families and educators learn more about increasingly popular social networking sites and how they are used as a communications tool, the 2 SMRT 4U Family/Educator Toolbox provides tips and ideas on how to talk openly with teens about the potential risks of revealing too much information. It consists of three components: "Social Networking 101," "Start a Conversation" and "Safety Tips" for families and educators. The Toolbox also includes real-life stories from teens; tips for families, educators and teens; a poster and two sets of resource cards for adults who want to spread the word about Internet safety to the young people in their lives. For those who instruct or mentor the youth audience, the Toolbox also has a downloadable presentation for mentors, counselors or teachers to share in a group setting.

To learn more about the 2 SMRT 4U campaign, visit www.2SMRT4U.com, where you can access the 2 SMRT 4U Family/Educator Toolbox or request a free 2 SMRT 4U ring.