

# Web Safety

## 5 Ways to Stay Safe and Have Fun Online

Experts say almost 90 percent of U.S. teens are online. But not everyone knows how to surf the Web in a smart way. With these five tips, you can have fun, stay safe, and avoid embarrassment!



# 1

### Pick a Safe Password

E-mail has many uses. You can e-mail friends to say hi. You can e-mail your homework to your teacher. You can even apply for a job by e-mail. E-mail is great—as long as other people can't read your private messages.

You need a password to get into your e-mail account. Make sure your password is something that other people won't be able to guess. Use numbers in between letters. "spar123ky" is better than "sparky123."



4) ©SHANNON FAGAN/GETTY IMAGES; PAGE 18, BOTTOM: ©GUSTAVO CABALLERO/GETTY IMAGES

# 2

## Pick a Safe Username

How often do you LOL (laugh out loud) with your BFF (best friend forever) online? Many teens e-mail and IM (instant message). It's an easy way to stay in touch. Some teens also use chat rooms and message boards. They can help you find information on a favorite car, band, or movie.

To send messages in any of these ways, you need a **username**. Make sure yours doesn't say too much about you. "Happygrrl3" is better than "AliceWaters13." Don't include your name, age, or where you are from.

It's best if strangers online can't find you in the real world. One in five kids online has been **approached** by an adult he or she didn't know.

Be careful with strangers. Never tell a stranger your name, school, address, age, birthday, phone number, or friends' names.



# 3

## Don't Share Too Much

Save personal talk for face-to-face or phone conversations. Friends might not mean to hurt you, but they might not always keep your secrets. Anything you send online—a note or a picture—can be forwarded to other people.

In 2003, a California ninth-grader sent pictures and love notes to a boy she had known all her life. The boy passed the messages around. His friends started calling her. Girls at his school threatened her. To get the calls to stop, the girl and her mom had to threaten to call the police.



# 4

## Beware of Bullies

Chatting online will usually be fun. But what if someone starts bothering you? Bullies can send IMs calling you names. They can post false information about you in public places.

When a bully writes to you, it's best not to **respond**. If someone keeps writing to you, tell a trusted adult. You can also block that person from writing to you by clicking "block user" on your screen. If you don't see the "block user" button, ask an adult for help. If someone posts information about you online, tell an adult right away.

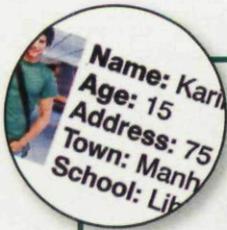


## Help Shaq Guard the 'Net

Shaquille O'Neal of the Miami Heat is helping to catch adults who go online to hurt kids. He's also helping to teach everyone about Internet safety. "I'm proud to help," says Shaq. To learn more about how you can help keep the Web safe, visit [www.scholastic.com/teenwebsafety](http://www.scholastic.com/teenwebsafety).

## WORD WORKOUT

**us•er•name:** online nickname | **ap•proached:** spoken to, moved toward  
**re•spond:** answer



# 5

## Know Who Knows All About You

Do you have a personal page online? Many people have personal pages to share interests, pictures, and news with friends.

Before you set up a personal

page, ask yourself this: Would you mind if your parents and teachers saw your personal page? If your page is posted publicly, anyone can see it. "Anyone" includes your mom, your teacher, and almost 70 percent of all Americans!

Shannon Sullivan, 14, went on the TV show *60 Minutes* in January 2006. She talked about her experience with a personal page. "I honestly thought it was

just my friends looking at it," Shannon said. Shannon's mom found her page. She was shocked by all of the personal information Shannon was sharing. Shannon's mom showed her how to set her page to "private." Some **hosts** of personal pages let you choose who can see your page. You can choose "friends only" or "two degrees" to keep your page private.

—Zoë Kashner

## GRAPHIC ORGANIZER: Problem and Solution

One way to better understand what you read is to think about problems and solutions. Fill in the blanks with problems and solutions from the article you just read.

Problem #1: Your e-mail password is easy to guess.

Solution #1:

Problem #2: Someone posted information about you on the Web.

Solution #2:

Problem #3:

Solution #3: Set your personal Web page to "friends only."

## WORD WORKOUT

in•cludes: is made up of | hosts: companies that offer online services

Copyright of Scholastic Action is the property of Scholastic Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.