Did You Know?

• 33% of all Internet-initiated sex crimes involve social networking sites.¹

• In 82% of online sex crimes against minors, the offender used the victim's social networking site to gain information about the victim's likes and dislikes.²

• The predominant sex crime scenario doesn't involve violence or stranger molesters posing online as children; only 5% of offenders concealed the fact they were adults from their victims. Almost 80% of offenders were explicit about their intentions with youth. In 73% of crimes, youth go to meet the offender on multiple occasions for multiple sexual encounters.³

¹ Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010
² Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010
³ NJOV Study, 2007
It’s really easy to be someone you’re not on the Internet. After all, who’s going to know if you add a couple inches to your height, use a different picture, or add a couple zeros to your net worth? You can be funnier, cuter, more confident -- the ideal version of you. But guess what? If it’s easy for you to be someone you’re not, it’s easy for someone else as well. Anyone who’s ever seen an episode of Bones or CSI knows there are people who use the Internet to meet kids for criminal purposes, and they’re not always that easy to spot. They’re really good at what they do: making friends with and trying to seduce teens into meeting them for sex.

Sometimes the predator pretends to be a teenager, trying to meet you on your level. He could have a normal-looking profile with current music, videos, and a picture of a hot teen-next-door, or he might come right out and say he’s 35, 47, or 68 years old. There are a lot of these guys. Did you know that 1 in 7 kids received a sexual solicitation online? These guys prey on teens who are unsure of themselves, eager for attention and spend a lot of time online. So all of us, basically. So if you don’t want your life to resemble an episode of CSI, there are some things you can do.

Remember, people aren’t always who they say they are.
That cute, blonde sophomore you met the other day could be a 50-something-year-old man with a weakness for a 14-year-old. It’s more than possible. So watch what you say online.

Don’t post personal information or revealing pictures in your profile.
Once an image or bit of information is put online, you can’t control it. Your pic could end up on a pedophilic porn site, your face could be photoshopped to a porn star’s body and emailed all over, your mom could find it. I used to have my cell number posted on my profile, but after the third creepy call from a guy I didn’t know, I took it down.

Report inappropriate behavior to web administrators. That’s what the Report Abuse! button is for! If you feel really threatened, call the cops. In most states it’s illegal for an adult to have a sexually explicit conversation with a minor, and if an adult tries to send you pictures or get pictures from you, that’s definitely illegal!

STATUTORY RAPE IS RAPE!
A 20-year-old who meets a 16-year-old for sex will go to jail in many states in the US because it is a crime. Do not allow yourself to be preyed upon by those who would commit such crimes. Question what kind of person would risk jail time to meet a teenager for sex. Question what else would they do? Would they forcibly rape you? Blackmail you? Kidnap you? The red flag needs to go up. Only a bad, potentially dangerous adult will meet a teen for sex. It is a crime.

Report it!
Ways to Report an Online Predator

• If you think there is a threat to your safety or well being, call 911, or your local police immediately. Let them know that a stranger has threatened you online, and that you would like to make a report. You will never get in trouble for making such a report, even if it turns out the predator wasn’t real.

• Submit a report to the CyberTipline. The CyberTipline is an agency that was created by the United States Congress to take reports of abusive behavior towards children on the Internet. Reports can be submitted anytime 24/7 at cybertipline.com, or toll free at 1-800-843-5678.

• Submit a report to the web site’s admins. This step will not protect you but is important to protect other users. You will be helping to build a history on a potential predator. Click the Report Abuse! link and send in a report. The site’s admins will investigate it and possibly remove the user. Remember, if you sense any threat or danger, you need to call the police immediately.

REMEMBER
Sexting could be considered manufacturing and distribution of child pornography.7

No Safe Way to Meet Up

Remember, there is no safe way to meet up with someone in real life that you originally met online, but if you must meet someone, follow these tips:

• Get to know them: Talk with them for a while online before even considering taking things offline.

• Call and video call them: Make sure they are who they say they are, see what they look like, and hear their voice. If they don’t want to talk on the phone or video chat before meeting you, don’t meet up with them.

• Tell a close friend or family member: Before meeting someone in person, tell someone who you trust where you are, whom you are with, how to contact you, and when you should be back.

• Bring a friend: Bring another person you trust with you to the meeting.

• Meet in a public place: Never, under any circumstances, meet in a private location. Meet at a mall or a coffeehouse, and don’t accept a ride to be picked up and driven to the location. Only meet them in the public place, and don’t let them take you back home. Keep where you live unknown.
Stop Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying has real effects.
Megan Meier, a 13-year-old girl, became friends with a boy, Josh Evans, on MySpace. They became friends, but one day, he changed, and he started saying that she wasn’t very nice to her friends. That snowballed into public bulletins saying she was a slut and fat. On October 16, 2006, she got her last message from Josh, “Everybody in O’Fallon knows how you are. You are a bad person and everybody hates you. Have a shitty rest of your life. The world would be a better place without you.” Her parents found her hanging in her closet later that night. Josh Evans never existed; an ex-best friend’s mother created the account, and Megan Meier didn’t live to see her fourteenth birthday. To learn more about Megan Meier, visit the Megan Meier Foundation: meganmeierfoundation.org.

Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old freshman at Rutgers University, jumped off the George Washington Bridge in September 2010, after finding out that his roommate, Dharun Ravi, used a webcam to stream Tyler kissing another man. Ravi also invited his Twitter followers to view it. This invasion of privacy and cruelty led to Clementi’s death. To learn more about Tyler Clementi, visit the Tyler Clementi Foundation: thetylerclementifoundation.org.

Dealing with Bullies

Cyberbullies use the Internet to harass you. These jerks use the Internet to harass people they don’t like, friends they’re mad at, or total strangers. Cyberbully attacks are especially cruel because a lot of the time, you don’t know where they’re coming from. Cyberbullying comes in a few guises. There are the one-on-one messages, someone could distribute your personal information or embarrassing photos through emails, texts, or postings on a website, or someone could actually be trying to hack your computer or website through viruses or DOS attacks or something else. Being bullied hurts all the time, whether it’s in the real world or online. Extreme forms of cyberbullying can lead to suicide. Watch what you say online, and if you’re getting harassed online (or offline).
Here are some things you can do to make bullying stop:

- **Call Someone.** Victim advocates associations like the Stalking Resource Center or Safe Horizon (800-621-HELP) can help you assess threats and explain your legal options. If you sense a threat, call 911 and get law enforcement immediately.

- **Block the harasser.** It is the easiest way to knock out harassment.

- **Delete the profile, blog, e-mail or IM account that is being attacked.** If they don’t know where to find you, they cannot harass you. You can always start a new blog, profile, e-mail or IM account.

- **Document the harassment.** All texts, IMs, and emails should be saved to show to the proper authorities if the harassment continues.

- **Ignore them.** Really, it works. Most bullies are trying to get a rise out of you, so don’t give it to them! Block their IMs, delete their emails, and take them off your friends list. If you don’t give them a reaction, they’ll get bored and move on.

- **Report them to web admins and their ISP or web host.** If someone’s posted your address or picture without your permission, you can probably get their host to take it down. But it might be a complicated process, and you will be asked to provide proof that you’re who you say you are. If you need help getting through the bureaucracy, ask your school’s IT director or your parents for help.

## Report Violence and Self-Harm

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year-olds.\(^5\)

Being a teenager is scary, stressful, and confusing. Social media gives kids who are in trouble lots of places to go for help, and it also gives them a bunch of opportunities to ask for help if they need it. If you find one of these cries for help on a friend’s blog or in a status update, you'll probably want to help, but you'll probably also be a little freaked out and not really sure how to help.

\(^5\) [http://www.save.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.viewpage&page_id=705d5df4-055b-f1ec-3f66462866fcb4e6]
Here are some things to do if you find someone online who’s threatening to hurt or kill themselves, or whom you think might be in danger:

• **CALL 911:** This is really important. If you believe the person is in immediate danger of hurting himself or herself, call 911 immediately and tell the operator that you want to report a suicidal person. If you can, tell the operator exactly where the person lives. If you can’t, give as much information as you can: full name, age, gender, general location, screen names, email addresses, IP address, where the threats were posted, and anything else you can think of.

• **Right away, call the person if you have their phone number** or find some other way to get in touch with them through emails or IMs or whatever. It’s important to get them to talk about what’s wrong and make sure they know they’re not alone.

• **Tell someone!** Track down a web moderator, talk to your school guidance counselor, your favorite teacher, your pastor or rabbi, or even your parents. They’ll be able to help you make sure the person is okay. If you’ve been asked to keep suicidal behavior secret, don’t! Some secrets shouldn’t be kept. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among those 15-24 years old. People who are suicidal almost always show some warning signs beforehand. For more information about violence, suicide, and self-harm, check out ReachOut.com.

Preventing Another Columbine or Virginia Tech at Your School
Did you know that each of these shootings could have been prevented? Eric Harris, one of the shooters at Columbine, set up a blog nearly three years before the massacre that spoke of his plans. An English professor reported Seung-Hui Cho to the campus-counseling center. To help prevent these tragedies, always take threats seriously and encourage your school to have an anonymous tip box to promote an atmosphere of school safety.
Hackers, Phishers, and Scammers

What is a hacker?
A hacker is a person who will try to gain access to your account that you did not authorize. When they gain access to your account, they can post as you, message your friends, delete your account, and possibly even gain access to your other accounts. They can ruin your reputation, bully others, and do other destructive things. To keep people out of your account, follow these password security tips:

• Make your password hard to guess by using a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and special characters.

• Change your password often.

• Do not use the same password with more than one account. Think about it: If you use the same email and Facebook password, and someone found out your Facebook password, they can log into your email and potentially gain access to every single account that that email address is associated with by using “forgot my password” links.

• Do not write your password down where someone else can find it. Don’t put it on a post-it near your computer. Keep it safe.

• Don’t tell anyone your password. Even if it is your best friend or significant other, no one should know your password.

What is phishing?
Phishing is a way for bad people to steal your identity. Phishing scams will send links to you that are supposed to take you to a trusted site. It could be an email that looks like it came from your bank or it could be a link that seems to force you to re-sign into your account to save your account from deletion. No matter the form – it’s a scam. To protect against phishing you should follow these tips:

• Don’t ever give any personal information over email or private message. If your bank needs to confirm your account number, call them using the number on the back of your bankcard – don’t respond to the email. Reputable sources will never ask you for your account information in this way.

• Don’t click on links within emails or in private messages.

• Login to the company’s website by typing in the URL into the address bar – don’t sign in through any links from the email or message.
Reaching Parents

So your parents are totally clueless about the Internet and mobile devices? Here are some websites you can send them to teach them everything they need to know about the Internet:

• **SocialSafety.org**: a guide to online safety for teens and tweens and social networking safety.

• **WiredSafety.org**: all-inclusive, free resource focusing on Internet safety, help and education for Internet users of all ages.

• **MissingKids.com**: The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

• **ConnectSafely.org**: a guide for parents, teens, educators, advocates interested in the impact of the social Web.

• **OnGuardOnline.gov**: an informative and complete resource on Internet safety.

Hello Blog, Goodbye Job!

Do you know who’s looking at your blog, your Twitter or Facebook profile? Your teachers, the cops, college admissions counselors, your boss, the director of that internship you want, and your mom are. Half of potential employers will reject a worker after looking at their Facebook page.6 Did you hear about the guy who stole over $200K from Seattle banks and then posted about his exploits on Facebook?7 How about the kid who got busted for possession when he posted pictures of himself hitting a bong? Untagging yourself in inappropriate pictures isn’t enough – if it’s online, consider it public. If you have a picture or post that you would be devastated if the whole world saw, delete it. Police, teachers, and guidance counselors have been getting training in navigating sites like Facebook and deciphering the blogosphere, and employers and admissions officers will check it out, too. Watch what you post online.

Here are a couple things you can do to cover yourself:

• **Don’t post stupid things online.** No scantily clad photos, nothing about drugs, alcohol, or sex.

• **If you absolutely must must must** post the exposés of your life, lock them so they’re Friends Only or Private. But remember that even locked, there’s still a good chance someone you don’t intend to see it could view it.

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7 http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1943680_1943678_1943647,00.html