



APRIL'S CRIME PREVENTION TIP OF THE MONTH

Internet Safety for Children

Children are exposed to computer use in ever-increasing numbers and society has embraced technology as essential. Many uninformed parents fail to realize the threat to children by unsupervised use of computers accessing the Internet. Children who use the Internet are less likely to fall victim to illegal computer use when they are armed with preventive information from their parents or other sources. Parents should review the following tips and then decide how to best communicate the information to their children.

Rules of the "Cyberspace" Road

Parents and caregivers are ultimately responsible for their children's safety both in the "real" world and in "cyberspace". Parenting entails setting firm limits so that children will understand expectations. This includes computer use. These guidelines may help:

- Tell your child that you will be monitoring their computer use and Internet activities.
- Do not allow your child to have multiple e-mail accounts or create accounts without your knowledge. Insist that your children give you their e-mail and chat room passwords.
- Register Internet accounts and primary screen names under your name.
- Have your child contact you immediately if a stranger tries to contact them on the Web.
- Find out who your child sends Instant Messages to and/or chats with. Prohibit the use of private chat rooms. Identify everyone on your child's contact and/or buddy lists.
- Direct your child not to divulge personal information on the Internet, including his or her name, age, photos, gender, physical description, telephone number, address, etc. Internet predators look at personal profiles stored on the Internet to find their victims.
- Limit the sites that your child is allowed to visit.
- Set time limits on your child's computer use.
- Prohibit your child from chatting (sending Instant Messages) during homework-related computer time.

