

HOME CYBER DEFENSE

ARE YOU SAFE FROM CYBER CRIME?

WEEKLY

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This is a weekly publication dedicated to your personal cyber security. Our newsletter is designed to help the public recognize and avoid cyber threats while they are online. If you are not a subscriber, please go to HomeCyberDefense.net to sign up.

Cyber Stalking



The Internet is an amazing thing. It is a way to connect individuals from around the world, together without ever having to leave the comfort of home. It can be used to gather information that was never accessible so readily and provides for a way to discuss aspects of life with old and new friends. With this power and greatness, though, come many risks, especially when it comes to children. All individuals,

especially children and teenagers, are susceptible to cyber stalking as the result of Internet usage.

Cyber stalking is related to cyber bullying. This act involves using the Internet to keep tabs on and essentially “stalk” someone in the online world, like a criminal might do in the offline world. Stalking may be just as overt as cyber harassment or more ambiguous and hidden. Cyber stalking occurs when an individual’s location, web history, and use of the net are followed or trailed by a hacker, or sometimes by someone you think is a friend. This can remain in the virtual setting where this information is used to either harass or threaten, or even just to know what is going and occurring in an individual’s life. In contrast, it may also be taken outside the realm of the virtual as well. Cyber stalking is a very serious offense, but can turn even more problematic if the individual takes their actions outside of the virtual and into the actual world. For that reason, there needs to be precautions taken so physical injury, assault, or other problems do not happen to you.

Here are a few steps to take to prevent being stalked while you are online:

1) Beware of bad online neighborhoods. Just like bad areas in the physical world, there are online neighborhoods where you should not tread. Some examples: “Chat rooms” are the top spot for online predators. (A whole other lesson you have in this course.) What is scary is studies have shown you can go to a chat room posing as a 13-year-old girl, and over 75% of the time you’ll be asked to go into a private chat within minutes, and it is very likely the person at the other end of the chat is an adult.

2) Create a Fence. If you don’t think you’re savvy enough to monitor your own online activity, you can buy a monitoring service like

SafetyWeb or SocialShield for as little as \$100 annually. There are also free or inexpensive products that scan site you may want to go to, and will block your access if determined that the content is inappropriate.

3) Use a gender-neutral email address to disguise your identity from stalkers who target young girls. (Or young boys.)

4) Use an email address from a free provider, such as Gmail, AOL or Yahoo!, rather than one supplied by your online service provider. This will make it harder for a stalker to discover where you live and other key details they need to know to successfully stalk you.

5) Avoid heated online arguments on social media or through instant messages to keep from making online enemies. Stalkers also can try to make you angry to trick you into revealing information you normally would not provide. If someone tries to bait you into an argument, just sign off before the discussion becomes toxic.

6) Do not help friends who are being stalked or harassed by engaging with the perpetrators on their behalf. This will just put a target on you to become the stalkers next victim.

Above all, if you or a friend are being stalked, contact the authorities. There are specific laws and penalties for stalkers, especially ones who stalk underage adults. This is something that stalkers hope you don't know about, and they gamble on the fact that you are either too embarrassed to report them, or are not aware of the dangers.

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