

The Federal Bureau of Investigation projected that in the year 2005, 17 million children between the ages of 12-17 will be online. Of those 17 million, two in five will become a victim of Internet crime. That's millions of children.

NO CHILD IS SAFE FROM INTERNET CRIME

A Guide For Parents

"No Child is Safe, reveals the chilling truth about the very real attack against our children. The good news is every one of them is 100% preventable! Amber Frangos equips the reader with what is needed to stay alert and aware of our children's activities on the Internet." --**Juvenile Parole Officer State of Ohio, Dept. of Youth Services, Randy S. Britain**

"Reading, writing, math, and *No Child Is Safe.* A must-read for parents with children on the Internet." --**Norton 21 Parent's Group (PTA), Jill Wooley**

"A highly recommended first-read for parents on this vital topic."
--**Florida Publishers Association, Association Executive, Betsy Lampe**

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Parents have many things to worry about, from day care to schooling, discipline, teaching values, health, relationships, and everything that goes along with raising children in the 21st century. But one area a parent absolutely can't afford to fall short in is protecting children from Internet crime and online predators. A new book by at-risk –youth educator Amber Frangos provides a valuable guide for parents on this subject, *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime.*

"Your child knows more about the Internet than you do," warns Frangos, "but you can catch up and arm yourself with tools and resources to help ensure your child's safety."

No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime teaches parents:

- Critical steps parents must take to protect their children from online pedophiles, perverts, porn, harassment, identity theft, and spam.
- How their child can fall victim to savvy online predators and identifies the danger zones.
- What to expect from their children, based on age, and how to predator-proof your computers and children.
- The profile of an online predator.

“Internet crime against children is the number one crime against children, says Frangos, “outranking all others. The Internet predator is a vital threat to your child and you can bet they are as proficient on the computer as your child and a whole lot smarter. You owe it to yourself to be as proficient and smart as they are, but more importantly, you owe it to your child.”

Frangos’ message is strong and empowering: “All children are at risk to online threats. Parents must learn the components of the computer to keep their child safe. The resources available to parents are easily obtained and when used properly greatly reduce the risk that their child will become a victim of Internet crime.”

Indeed, her book is a primer for parents with very little computer knowledge. It offers tips and guidelines to help parents manage their child’s online activities that will maximize their safety. *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime* contains:

- A Netspeak glossary for parents to decipher the terms and language used on the Internet.
- Emoticons guide so parents can recognize symbols and icons that convey emotions and feelings.
- A glossary of technological terms and law enforcement terms relating to crimes against children.
- Explanations of the various software filters available.
- An overview of how the Internet works, from mechanics to complexities.

Frangos also educates parents on what to do if their child receives unwanted attention online – or if he or she is approached by a predator. She identifies the danger signs that a child may be involved with an online predator and provides contact information for the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, and The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. An emergency call list is contained in her book as well.

She makes it clear that parents can – and must – get educated about the Internet and be more involved in monitoring and controlling their child’s access and usage online. “The strategy should not be to prevent your child from exploring the magnificence of the Internet to maintain friendships, discover the mysteries of a hobby, or locate interesting and educational information,” says Frangos, “but parents must load up on Cyber Armor to protect the family. The Internet predator is smart, elusive, anonymous, and virtually invisible. We need every edge we can find to keep our children safe.”

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Amber Frangos

Biography

Amber Frangos, an at-risk-youth educator, researcher, and writer, is the published author of *No Child Is Safe from Internet Crime: A Guide For Parents*. She has been documenting the threats of online predators to our children for the past several years.

Her previous book was *The Butterfly Net*, a novel about a child who was abducted through the Internet by an adult posing as another child.

Frangos, who has an extensive background in educating children in crisis, lectures on the dangers of the Internet to parents, and writes full time.

She has taught pre-k to Title-20 children, managing the children's behavior so they would be in a position to learn.

Frangos also taught children that were removed from their homes due to unsafe conditions. The students ranged from the severely emotionally disturbed, sexually abused, physically abused, or neglected. A large percentage of students had committed felony crimes and were deemed by the court as mentally incompetent to be housed in a detention home.

She also worked in continuing education with lower-income students with learning disabilities, including crack babies, fetal alcohol syndrome children, and severely physically abused children.

Frangos received her BA in Liberal Studies and Education from California State University in San Bernardino, in 1991. She attended California State University for post-graduate study in child psychology, but did not complete her Masters.

She resides with her family in Thonotosassa, Florida.

For more information, please consult www.AmberFrangos.com.

A Plan Of Attack

“Your child knows more about the Internet than you do,” says Amber Frangos, author of *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*. “And sexual predators know more about how to manipulate children over the Internet than law enforcement can keep up with. But as a parent, you can have the following plan of attack to limit or prevent harm coming to your child.”

1. Set up your sign-on where only the parent has the password to access the Internet. Even if your child uses the computer when you are not readily available to supervise them, they cannot surf without your knowledge.
2. Your ISP has or should have a security measure that supports COPPA (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act). If you have a child under the age of 13 years old, all Websites are required to contact the parent for consent. This control allows you the ability to monitor where your child has been online.
3. The most important thing a parent can do is communicate with their child. With direct communication, your child can understand the dangers present and be able to follow through on whatever training you provide to them.
4. Set up a level of security about e-mail. Either use your ISP filter or monitor the e-mail directly. You need to be able to access the content of your child’s e-mail, at least randomly, and follow through by doing it.
5. Create a system to monitor which Websites your child cruises. Here again, there are several types of software that offer varying levels of security. These range from restricting key words and phrases to the type of software that displays the history of your child’s activities (which detail the Web pages they have visited).
6. Closely monitor their chat room activities. The chat room is the most dangerous of all your child’s interactions. The only 100% foolproof method is to actually sit next to your child and watch their every move.
7. Have a concrete plan of action already in place if your child becomes a victim. If your child receives threats or is approached, contact the correct authority. This may include your ISP or police. Have a list of phone numbers already in place (FBI, ISP, Center For Missing & Exploited Children). When you are in a panic or worried about your son or daughter, the last glitch you will want to experience is locating a contact phone number. If, your child becomes abducted, you should be able to list which Websites were visited, online instant messenger buddies, the chat rooms they visit, and their e-mail contacts. The more information you can provide to the authorities will be directly related to their being able to investigate as thoroughly and quickly as possible -- and ultimately saving their life.

“Parents can make a big dent in Internet crime by taking these steps and getting more involved in their children’s affairs,” says Frangos. “By taking the initiative, maybe, just maybe, we can seize control of the Net from predators.”

The Internet Predator

A Profile Of Danger

The image of an overweight, sloppy, drooling pervert, leaning over child porn in a darkened room is an extreme stereotype. The more accurate profile of an Internet pedophile is one of a highly intelligent, materially successful, white, well-respected, middle-aged male. These men are generally hardworking, family men, with strong ties to their religion. They are extremely savvy Net users.

Amber Frangos, the author of *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*, says today's Internet predator:

- Approaches your child with anonymity, and he has the means to spend hours of access on the computer.
- Initiates hundreds of encounters with children online.
- Has become highly organized and proficient in his ability to lure children.
- Is able to build trust with your child. He spends weeks, sometimes months, grooming your son or daughter. He is patient and understanding of your child's insecurities.
- Develops a strong relationship with your child that puts a wedge between you and your child. The child begins to trust the judgment of their online friend instead of the guidance of their parent. The predator knows that the child needs empathy, and they will become whatever mirror the child needs.

“When visiting a chat room, your child has a one hundred percent (100%) chance of being approached by a sexual predator,” says Frangos. “The majority of sexual predator abductions were initiated through a chat room.”

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has several operations that infiltrate chat rooms. These detectives pose as adolescent children. During one such FBI sting, the investigators were approached at an average of seven seconds after they entered the chat. In those seven seconds, the predator used sexually explicit language. If the child were curious (and what child isn't?) they would take the bait.

Not only had the relationship begun, but the predator believed they were soliciting a child. This type of contact would develop for a while, then the predator would suggest calling the child, or having the child call them. The next step would be to arrange the actual meeting. What started as an innocent visit to a chat room, can end up costing your child his or her life.

So who can a parent trust? Unfortunately, no one. Arrests have included coaches, teachers, school bus drivers, firemen, policemen, a cheerleading instructor, clergy, physicians, and counselors. The sad fact is that this laundry list is a partial list. The one common factor with all of these arrests is that the perpetrators know how to run a computer.

9 Crucial Steps To Protecting Your Child

“The scary news is your child is in danger as soon as he or she logs on to the Net,” says Amber Frangos, the author of *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*. “The good news is you can do a lot to limit the risk posed to your child.”

She strongly advises parents to initiate the following nine crucial steps:

1. Spot-check your child’s Internet use. Know where they’ve been to prevent where they might be going. Randomly check their e-mail and scrutinize sample exchanges.
2. Instruct your children not to give out personal information. This protects against abduction, identity theft, and harassment – and telemarketers.
3. Do not allow your child online access to the Internet without your direct supervision. No exceptions. Create a log-in password that your children do not know.
4. Contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) and determine which security software package is right for your family’s needs. Without the software, it’s like driving a car without a seatbelt.
5. Encourage your children to approach you immediately if they feel something is not right.
6. Have a working knowledge of your child’s online e-mail friends, just as you would of his or her neighborhood pals.
7. Your child has a 100% chance of communicating with a pedophile or child abductor in a chat room. He or she will be approached, on average, within seven seconds of entering a chat room. That is why the parent needs to be present 100% of the time. Never allow your child to chat without direct parental supervision.
8. Limit your child’s Internet use – where, when, for how long – and you gain control over the factors that could lead to Internet crime.
9. Locate the computer with Internet access in a common, heavily trafficked area of your home. At any given moment you should be able to view your child’s online activities. Under no condition should your son or daughter have Internet access in private. The temptation is too great and the risk too dangerous.

“You must remember,” warns Frangos, “that as a parent, the risk that your child gets approached by a sexual predator is directly proportional to the time involved in monitoring their activities.”

Amber Frangos

Q&A

You recommend that parents should learn more about how the Internet works, even to study up on Netspeak and emoticons. Why? Netspeak and emoticons are a type of code-abbreviated way of communicating. LMIR means let's meet in real life. POS means parent over shoulder. The ones I list in *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime* are common and a parent should have a working knowledge of these because if their child is online, they communicate with them. As for learning how the Internet works, this is the only armor a parent can use to safeguard their children from online predators. If the parent is clueless as to the dangers present, the child will become a statistic. The children who were abducted had parents that did not fully understand how to monitor their child's online activities.

What are some signs your child may have fallen prey to inappropriate online activity? They close the monitor screen when a parent is present. They hide information on a disk. You find porn on their computer or e-mail addresses they haven't told the parent about. They receive gifts in the mail from people the parent does not know. Their demeanor changes, your outgoing friendly child may become quiet and reflective. Your usually docile child may become irritated easily. The goal is to know the behavior of your child and determine the cause of their change.

Please share with us three safety tips parents must implement today. The first one is to become aware in the child's online activities. This means the parent needs to have some level of knowledge of how the Internet works. The second one is to check their email -- find out who their online friends/buddies are. This is done to assure the child is corresponding with another child. Complete the Emergency Call List located in the appendix of *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*.

What are some of the newer challenges posed by online threats to our children? The sophistication of the online predator. They use a guerilla attack when luring children. They will contact a child through a chat room, email, the telephone, and request a meeting. The predator is able to lure the child over many months or over the short term. The predator is adept at zeroing in on the mindset of the child and uses it to his full advantage.

What information should a child never give out or share with strangers? Never give out personal information, last name, home address, phone number, school attended, church attended. The predator is patient, and he will glean this information over several months. For example, the child might not question giving out his name. Then at the next session with the predator, the child would tell which school he attends. This layering is done over several sessions, which results in the predator acquiring very detailed information about the child.

As an at-risk-educator, and author who has been documenting the threats online predators pose to our children for years, what kinds of progress have you witnessed? The FBI, The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, The Department of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement have become quite proficient in setting up task forces to catch online predators. In most instances they pose as children to catch the online sexual predator. Their involvement is multi-jurisdictional and they work in tandem to catch the predator. They take online crime against children very seriously.

Is law enforcement doing enough to protect our children from online predators? They are doing the best they can, but the numbers are extremely large. 17 million children under the age of 18 will be online. 40 % of those will become a victim of Internet crime. The process of catching the online criminal is tedious and time consuming. That is the reason I wrote *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*. Prevention of these crimes is the strongest effort a parent can use to stop the online criminal.

What is the profile of Internet perverts? The common profile is that of a white, mid-thirties, well-educated, male. They are active in their church, usually have a wife and children, and they are proficient on the computer. But, arrests have been made where the online predator was a cheerleading instructor, a school bus driver, a fire chief, a police chief, a teacher, a priest, big sister, big brother, and foster parent. So, the typical profile of an online predator covers a wide field.

What steps can a parent take to limit the risk of their child falling into the hands of an online pedophile? Communicate with their child. If the parent is uncomfortable with the computer, and most parents know less than their child does, they need to overcome that fear and get involved. The parent must, without exception, learn the components of the computer/internet. *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime* is written with a common sense approach. A parent would be able to pick up the book, read it, and have a working knowledge of how to protect their child from online threats.

Are there any changes in the law you'd like to see that could protect our children from online scammers, harassers, identity thieves, and child molesters? The first change I'd like to see is to redefine possession of child pornography. The legal argument for the defense is weighted toward proving who has possession. If an FBI investigator discovers child porn on the accused's computer, this does not prove possession in the eyes of the law. Also, the sentence of possessing child porn is a third degree felony. The law should be if you possess child porn it is the same as committing the act depicted in the photo. Both instances are an extreme assault on the purity of the child. As for scammers, harassers, identity thieves the child is at the same risk as the parent. The key to protecting the child from these is for the parent to educate the child on what each one is. Scammers and identity thieves are extremely adept at duping adults, so a child is even more easily misled.

What are some of the better security software programs out there? The better security software programs are called server-based software and they are provided by the Internet Service Providers. The reason these are better is that they are updated and maintained at the ISP as opposed to the client based

software that the user installs and maintains. For beginning users, (which includes the majority of parents), the client based filters can be tedious and difficult to manage. I use the server-based programs. They are compatible with the parent's Internet, because they are supplied by the Internet provider that they use. If a problem occurs, the parent can contact their ISP and the ISP will research the problem and solve it.

Why do you encourage parents to visit porn sites? I encourage parents to visit the homepages of porn sites, so they can gauge what it is their child will be seeing if they do happen upon one. I do not encourage a parent to become members of the sites nor do I encourage them to enter the sites. The home pages of the websites are set up to lure adults into them. These homepages have explicit photographs of what the visitor can expect to see when they enter the site. The language is explicit. These photographs do have the most overt areas blackened out, but they are still quite explicit and it is not something you want your child to view.

What should a parent do if his or her child has been approached online by someone with suspicious intent? Try to determine the level of threat. Does the predator know where the child lives? Do they know where the child attends school? Church? Depending on the level of threat, the parent would then contact the local law enforcement. Show them the evidence, such as an e-mails written to the child, conversations from instant messaging, chat room. Photos of porn the child received.

How do you help 8 or 9-year-olds practice predator-proof activities online? In *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime* I have three levels of age breaks depending on the child's emotional maturity and development. 8-10-year-old, 11-13-year-old, and 14-17-year-old. For the 8 or 9 year old I suggest that the parent have the child engage in as many offline activities as possible. This age ranges loves using the computer and they are not as adamant as their older counterparts to online activities. The child can use educational software to reinforce their academic subjects: reading, math, writing, science, and social studies. The 8- or 9-year-old can play age appropriate computer games. Both of these types of computer software can be checked out at the local library. When your 8 or 9 year old is online, have safe guards in place.

Is it a mistake to assume your child is safe? Absolutely. Not only is it a mistake, but also it is dangerous. Seemingly innocent email messages can be a threat. If the predator is posing as another child, their e-mail conversations will reflect this. So, if a parent reads an e-mail where an online friend is asking Johnny to play baseball on Thursday and they arrange to meet. The parent needs to know if Johnny is meeting an adult or a child. If the only discourse has been through the computer, it is impossible to know the difference.

How do you know if your child fits the profile of becoming a potential victim? All children fit the profile. If a parent thinks their child cannot become a victim, they are seriously misinformed. Despite the ability of a child to maneuver the intricacies of the Internet, they are still a child. They reason like a child. When they use their decision-making skills, they use the logic of a child. The key to preventing a child from becoming a victim is to be aware of their

activities online and to communicate with the child the reasons you are implementing the safe guards.

Which organizations or government agencies should parents consult and have telephone numbers accessible for? Their local police department, the local FBI office, The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, their Internet Service Provider, the child's school. I have included an emergency call list in the appendix of *No Child Is Safe From Internet Crime*. The parent can fill it out with the appropriate numbers and have it one hand should their child become a victim.

How can a parent monitor a child's online activity, especially when the parent's not home or the child is at a friend's house? If the parent is not home, then the child should not be online. Period. There are several other computer activities children can do. Games, puzzles, or writing e-mail messages and saving them can all be performed offline. The goal of the parent is to be accessible when their child is online. As for their friend's house, know the policy of the friend's parents. Talk to them and decide if having your child visit them is something you are comfortable with. Talk to your child about their Internet manners when they are visiting a friend. If the friend wants to do an online activity that your son or daughter is not comfortable with have your child explain the reason. All children experience peer pressure on some level. The parent's relationship with the child will decide at what degree they fall to that pressure. If you keep your son or daughter informed as to why you are fearful, they will listen and follow your guidelines.

What can one's Internet Service Provider do to collaborate with you to ensure your child's safety? A lot. They have filter software that trails your son's or daughter's Web histories. They can retain instant message conversations. Copies of e-mails sent to your child. They can recover IP addresses visited, which is critical in tracking who made contact with your child. The parent determines the level of security. Some parents only want the email tracked. Others choose certain Websites that are off limits. The collaboration becomes effective only when the parent utilizes the resources the Internet Provider offers.

Why do chat rooms pose such an enormous danger? Chat rooms are dangerous because the predator can approach your child immediately. Once your child has entered a chat room within seven seconds the predator will use sexually explicit language. They will then try to obtain an email address so they can send your child photos of porn. The predator will try to get personal information from your child, which can be used to arrange a meeting with them. The relationship will evolve over several months or the predator will convince the child to meet them within a day. The depth of the layering the predator uses on the child convinces the child to use the judgment of their new online friend instead of the guidance their parents have taught them. I have had several authorities try to convince me to dissuade parents from letting their child visit chat rooms. My response is that it depends on the nature of the child. If the child is curious, they will visit a chat room with or without the parent's permission.