

## SURF SAFE

The Internet is a valuable tool that enriches our lives and can provide valuable learning and communication experiences for children. But the Internet also contains dangers that must be recognized and respected. This pamphlet and the Hawaii Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force's website, [www.hicac.com](http://www.hicac.com), offer information to protect children from the dangers of the Internet. By becoming familiar with the Internet, we will all be better able to minimize those dangers and SURF SAFE.

### Who We Are

Hawaii's Attorney General has created a statewide Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force with the help of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Hawaii ICAC Task Force is part of a cooperative nationwide network of ICAC Task Forces that are dedicated to protecting children in the online environment. In order to accomplish this goal, Hawaii's ICAC Task Force makes Internet education and information available to Hawaii's children, teachers and parents. If prevention efforts fail, Hawaii's ICAC Task Force is ready to vigorously investigate and prosecute persons who victimize children through the use of computers and the Internet.

### Parents: A False Sense of Security

Parents often feel that if their children are at home, and if they have Internet filtering software, their children are safe from online dangers. But this thinking is dangerously false.

Parents must understand that as the Internet grows, the potential for harm increases just as the educational benefits do. Furthermore, children need to learn to use and live with the Internet, but need to learn to do so safely. With this understanding parents should strive to become and remain informed of websites that their children frequent and aware of the potential dangers that accompany Internet use.

The solution is not to ban children from Internet activity. Children need the Internet and should be encouraged and taught to use it safely.

Parents must put themselves in their child's position, and understand the social stigma of sharing information of what occurs online with adults. Parents need to dispel their child's fears that knowledge of their child's Internet activity would put a stop to all online activity. Instead parents should let their children know that they need to be informed to protect and support them in case they need help.

### How You Can Help

Hawaii's ICAC Task Force asks that you inform us of Internet activity that you consider dangerous to children. Our relationship with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and other ICAC task forces around the country enables us to use information provided to address problems regardless of where in the United States they originate.

The Hawaii ICAC Task Force is especially interested in keeping children and parents informed about how to stay safe on the Internet. If you or your organization would like to learn more about our outreach programs or schedule a presentation, please contact us.

### The Hawaii Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force partners with the following government agencies:

Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, City & County of Honolulu  
City & County of Honolulu Police Department  
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Maui County  
Maui County Police Department  
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Hawaii County  
Hawaii County Police Department  
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Kauai County  
Kauai County Police Department  
Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs, State of Hawaii  
Department of Taxation, State of Hawaii  
Department of Public Safety, State of Hawaii  
Department of Human Services, State of Hawaii  
United States Attorney's Office  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
United States Secret Service  
United States Air Force  
Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS)  
United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury  
United States Postal Inspection Service

### DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION



Visit us online at: [www.hicac.com](http://www.hicac.com)

### Resources

- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
1-800-THE LOST      [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)
- NetSmartz Workshop      [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

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## Online Sexual Enticement of Children

Children are our community's most valuable and cherished assets. As they explore the Internet to communicate with friends and educate themselves, they may encounter people that will attempt to corrupt their innocence by enticing them with acts sexually inappropriate for minors.

Recent news stories have described horrific real world cases. Some television shows depict sting operations which catch perpetrators who use the Internet to converse with and entice minors to meet them for illicit purposes.

***1 in 7 children (10 to 17 years old) receive unwanted sexual solicitations online.***

## Social Networks

Social network websites seek to bring together friends and those with similar interests by allowing users to communicate using various means, including weblogs (online diaries), photographs and photo albums, chats, viewable personal profiles, and the option to befriend other users.

Current popular social network websites include Facebook, Friendster, MySpace, Xanga and others.

A major portion of social network users is under eighteen years old but they may inadvertently or intentionally be subjected to adult content and or communication.

Social networks may lead to cyber bullying that mimics real world bully and victim conditions.

Additionally, social networks that are popular among minors may attract dangerous predators who may try to befriend them and gain their trust in a process called "grooming."

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## Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying consists of sending or posting cruel messages, photos, or videos on the Internet or other electronic media with the intent of damaging the reputation of the target. Types of cyber bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Flaming (sending angry or vulgar messages).
- Harassing victims with repeated offensive or cruel messages.
- Creating web sites that have stories, cartoons, or pictures that mock others. They may ask peers to rate their physical attractiveness or other things.
- Impersonating another by breaking into his or her online account and sending vicious or embarrassing material to others.
- Tricking someone into revealing sensitive personal information, and electronically forwarding that information to others.

Cyber bullying has the unique ability to circulate through the schoolyard, the neighborhood and the entire world with a click of a button to quickly create severe and irrevocable harm.

Cyber bullying can be more damaging than bullying in person because bullies do not see the victim's reaction, which often stops or at least softens repeat attacks.

***Additionally, cyber bullying takes away the place that children feel safest—their home.***

Furthermore, the Internet's anonymity may allow bullies to hide their identity to add to the victim's insecurity.

## Cyber Threats

A cyber threat is a message that creates concern about the writer using violence against others or him or herself including suicide. Messages can be either explicit threats or clues as to the emotional stress of the individual and his or her willingness to commit these acts.

## Advice on How to SURF SAFE

- Educate your family on the opportunities for education and for danger on the Internet in order to take advantage of its beneficial uses and protect your family from its dangers.
- Keep the computer in a family room of your home, where there is lots of traffic, rather than in a private room.
- Create clear and simple rules for Internet usage. A good example may be found at [www.netismartz.org](http://www.netismartz.org).
- Try to remain as anonymous as possible by withholding last names, contact information and financial information.
- If children must create a personal screenname, it should not identify the user as a child.
- ***Talk to your children about the dangers of meeting with a person they first "met" online.***
- Advise children that if they ever become a victim of cyber bullying, to not respond, save the material and report it.
- Discuss with your family the value of treating others how they would like to be treated both in person and online.
- Remind your children that electronic postings are permanent. Each posting could continue to cause harm both to others and potentially to their own future.
- ***Contact your Internet service provider (ISP) such as AOL or Road Runner about parental controls to monitor and protect your children.***
- Point out that misconduct online can lead to grave consequences for others. You may explain to your children stories in the news of cyber bullies harming others in violent attacks or even suicide.
- Have your children use child-friendly search engines when completing homework.
- Remember that online not everyone is who they say they are. The Internet is educational and entertaining, but if you are not careful it can be dangerous as well.
- Be aware that ISPs do have rules of conduct. Violation of these rules may result in the temporary or permanent cancellation of service, among other consequences.
- Consider volunteering at your local library, school, or other organization to help young children online.
- Ask your children to think of how their actions reflect on them.
- ***Educate yourself and teach your family to SURF SAFE.***