

FAMILY WEB SITES

Family Web sites are a great way to network and keep in touch with family, especially those separated by distance. What parent wouldn't want to let everyone see the latest pictures of Bob and Jane, or talk about the gold medal Sue won in the swimming meet last week? Unfortunately, those very activities can catch the attention of some of the creepier types online and make it easy for them to target your family as victims.

THE DANGERS OF FAMILY WEB SITES

The dangers of family Web sites are that it's hard to talk and post about your family without revealing a TON of personal information! This personal information can draw the attention of predators, stalkers, cyber harassers, and more. Think about it! What family Web site doesn't include the following?

- 1. A BLOG, JOURNAL, OR INFORMATIVE LETTER** – Let everyone know what is going on in the family. Perhaps you mention what you did for the holidays or talk about the children's school activities.
- 2. PICTURES!** It wouldn't be a family Web site without lots and lots of pictures.
- 3. THE FAMILY NAME** – Lots of family Web sites make mention of your name – first and last.
- 4. EMAIL ADDRESS** – Got yours or the kids email addresses up on the page?
- 5. LINKS** – Perhaps you include links to your church or child's school – talk about loads of information such as location and more being given out.
- 6. ISP INFO** – If you're like many families you might be taking advantage of free hosting space provided by your internet service provider. This can also lead to issues because knowing your ISP can often pinpoint your location.

SAFETY TIPS

That doesn't mean you have to eliminate the family site completely. In fact there are lots of ways you can make your site safe and family friendly. Here are a few:

- 1.** Build your Web site to include a sign-in page that is password protected – then only give the password to those people you want viewing the site.
- 2.** Check and double-check your domain name and ISP to make sure they aren't revealing information. While it may be cool to have your site's domain as www.theramonefamily.com it is also giving out personal information.
- 3.** Make sure that the home page does not contain personal information, pictures, blogs, etc. Maintain this type of revealing information behind the password protection.

Run the site/page through several sets of eyes to evaluate just what it is revealing about you. You may not even realize or be aware of just what you are putting out there for the world to see.