

Faculty Insider—Online Shopping

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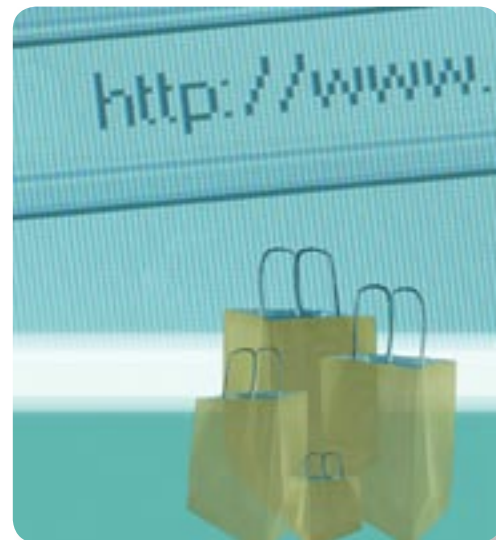
“The schools ain’t what they used to be and never was.”

~Will Rogers

With the Holiday season fast approaching many are already dreading the shopping rush, mall crowds, and lack of parking availability. Some may even be considering just forgoing all of the normal holiday shopping ‘fun’ in lieu of buying gifts online. The online environment allows one access to anything and everything one can typically find in a brick and mortar store. But before whipping out your credit card and making those big purchases make sure you know some basics for safer and securer online shopping.

First – decide: is online shopping for you? Do you NEED to handle fabrics, smell scents, wander and browse for hours? Or do you prefer to get in and out and grab the gifts on your list? There are some obvious benefits to online shopping—24 hour access to shops, larger selection, potential for saving money, and lack of stress associated with physical shopping. Online stores are even going one step further and offering gift guides to help you match up the recipient to a great gift.

However, there are also some drawbacks to online shopping. First, most online stores do not have a physical storefront to return merchandise if you are unhappy with it. And it can also be more difficult to get customer satisfaction for complaints. Secondly, there is the always present danger of revealing personal information online in order to make the purchase. Third, there is the danger of dealing with frauds and fakes online. Can you guarantee that the Fendi bag on eBay is the real thing? Brick and mortar shopping always has the advantage of being able to see, feel, taste, smell, and hear the item being purchased in person.



If you have weighed the benefits and drawbacks and decided online shopping is for you, there are ways to be safer and more secure and less likely to end up a victim of identity theft, spam, fakes, frauds, horrible customer service, etc. First, when shopping online it is important to use a secure browser. That means no shopping off the network at work where any information transmitted can be viewed by any network administrator.

Secondly, try to frequent online stores that you know and trust. Stick with larger name brand stores if possible. Plus many brick and mortar stores now

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NAC Tracks

Do your students use their cell phones to text message during class or to play online games?

- (1) Never
- (2) Rarely
- (3) Sometimes
- (4) Often

Vote here





Online Shopping *continued from page 1*


have an online version also. For example Target, Circuit City, Sears, and more. If you are tempted to use a lesser known site check for site reviews first.

No matter if you are buying off a big site or small one, make sure you review their customer service and privacy policies BEFORE buying. What is their return policy? How do you return items? Can your information be sold or traded with other marketing companies? These questions can help keep you out of hot water down the line.

Another important item to check before you click to buy is shipping. Sometimes an item seems like a great deal online but shipping charges can ratchet up the cost. On eBay some questionable sellers purposely sell items at low costs and make up the difference in “shipping and handling” fees. Furthermore, check to see when an item will be checked and

when you can expect to receive it. The last thing you want is to not receive your item until after the holidays are over!

As you purchase, make sure you keep your personal information private—not sharing it with others. Confirm the transaction is also secure on the shop’s end. Pay by credit or charge card and, for additional security, find out if your credit card offers a service for one-time use card numbers. For example, Discover Card offers a software program that allows one to log on and create a randomly generated credit card number for their account for one-time shopping use when online. This ensures that if anything does go wrong, your number/information can’t be used to make other purchases.

Safe online shopping is possible and can be a pleasant experience with a little planning and some basic safety and security smarts! 

Tech Tip—Keeping Personal Information Private

From high tech to low tech, identity theft is heating up. Especially during the holiday shopping season it is always a concern. According to Todd Davis, CEO of LifeLock, an Arizona company that helps its customers avoid becoming victims of identity theft, the biggest company of its kind, identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the U.S. for the sixth straight year.

What can you do to keep your online shopping safe?

Never click on links sent in unsolicited e-mails; instead, type in a Web address you know. Use firewalls, anti-spyware, and anti-virus software to protect your home computer; keep them up-to-date. Always look for the “lock” symbol on the Web site you are buying from.

Don’t use an obvious password like your birth date, your mother’s maiden name, or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

Keep your personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help, or are having work done in your house.

Shred financial documents and paperwork with personal information before you discard them. Research reveals that virtually every household is throwing away personal information every week.


Protect your Social Security number. Don’t carry your Social Security card in your wallet or write your Social Security number on a check. Give it out only if absolutely



necessary or ask to use another form of identification.

Don’t give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or over the Internet unless you know for certain who is on the other end.

We all need to be more careful with the information we retain. While shredding is the main way you can prevent yourself becoming a victim there are other things you can do. These include: (a) paying attention to billing cycles to ensure nothing has gone missing in the mail; (b) regularly checking your credit report with agencies to see if there have been any unexpected change and (c) protecting your mail by not leaving anything in your mailbox.

Maybe one of the hot holiday gifts this year will be a shredder. Just remember to be careful when you go online to buy it. 




NAC Corner—*Beware of Strangers Bearing Gifts*

During the holiday season your students may be more likely to receive inappropriate gifts from people they meet on the Internet. An ongoing i-SAFE national survey of 8,200 students in grades 5-12 to date finds that 3% have received money from people they met online, one in twenty (5%) have received other gifts of an unspecified nature, 3% have received gifts of pornography, and a little more than 2% have received drugs or alcohol as gifts. This gift-giving practice is troublesome not only because of the types of gifts, but also because a common tactic among child predators is to provide gifts to their targets. You may wish to counsel your students on the inappropriateness and potential dangers of accepting gifts from people they have never met.

It seems likely that some of your students will also be receiving gifts from their parents with the potential to impact the classroom. Take mobile devices for example, an increasingly popular way to access the Internet among youth. About one-half (51%) of the thousands of students in middle school surveyed by i-SAFE during the 2005-06 school



year reported owning a cell phone, while 75% of high school students did. Among the high school students who owned a cell phone, 46% indicated that they sometimes used it during classroom instruction. Among middle school students with a mobile device, 18% sometimes used theirs during classes. Thus a refresher on classroom mobile device policy may be in order when even more students return from the holiday break clutching a mobile device. 

Ask An Expert—Online Gaming: Learning the Limits

Online video gaming is a changing landscape. According to new research, many game designers are turning away from the “shoot-‘em-up” games popular with college students to design games that exercise the brain. For example, one game challenges players to make words out of a jumble of letters in a certain amount of time. Players then compare results in a chat room. Despite the new family-friendly trend, online video gaming sites remain a place where safety should come first. We talked to Matt Tieger, a senior game designer at High Moon Studios in California for some insight.

Q. Why is online video gaming becoming so popular?


A. Video games over the last few years have really grown from kind of a niche market to a mainstream kind of thing. I think games are kind of moving into an environment when everyone is going to start playing them. Games are an escape in lots of ways. I think the power in these systems is soon going to allow us to create crazy cool visions, some of which are very realistic.

Q. What should parents know about online video games?

A. Well, I have a bit of a leg up here because I make video games for a living and I know what kinds of games are

out there and how people are interacting with them. I think that’s a big responsibility for parents, taking the time to be informed, whether online or single player games. Games have ratings on them like M for mature or E for easy. I’ll see parents buying games that are too complicated for children that are six or seven years old. I think, as a parent, it’s important to be an informed consumer about what your children are doing.

Q. What can parents do to keep their kids safe on a video gaming Web site?

A. I think that the game should be part of the common space of your household. In my house, for example, the computer is not in my child’s room, it’s in a common space. We try to instill at a young age that you shouldn’t be doing things on the computer that make you feel like you need to be locked away in your room and doing things on your own. You need to set up rules for what your kids are doing online and let them know what’s not safe. Their world is very different from an adult’s concept of the world, so setting some ground rules for things that you feel are inappropriate is, I think, a responsibility that we have as parents. 




Did You Know?

Stock Spam

Lately, you may have noticed a lot of spam e-mail of the “stock tip” variety. The message advises investors to buy stock in a particular company as soon as possible to get good returns. Unlike other kinds of spam, stock spam generally does not include a link back to the spammer’s Web site. So how does the scam spammer get rewarded? By already owning the stock.

Basically, the purpose of this spam is to influence the stock price of the targeted company so the spammer can make a quick profit on his or her shares. The goal is to get a rush of investors to trade on the specified company, pushing the stock price up or down, whatever way is favorable to the spammer. While it may sound doubtful that this scheme actually works, a report done by a computer security company in Canada indicates it can. You might think to complain to the company whose stock is named in the message, but the targeted companies are rarely responsible for the messages.



Most are sent by third party speculators. Don’t be tempted to play. Making investments based on stock spam is as risky as it gets. Besides, if nobody buys from spammers, the problem might soon evaporate. 

Getting Caught

i-SAFE Inc. educates students and adults about seven main topics, including cyber predators, cyber bullying (online threats, insults, or harassment), personal safety, cyber-security issues, cyber citizenship, social networking, and intellectual property theft (illegal downloading). We focus our efforts on preventing bad things from happening to innocent people who use the Internet for fun, entertainment, and just keeping in touch with friends and loved ones.

Prevention really does pay off in better online behavior. We sometimes also sit up and take note when criminals who share Cyberspace with us are caught and put behind bars. In October, millions watched as arrests were made of predators, broadcast on Dateline NBC’s “To Catch a Predator.” Further convictions and fines were slapped on spammers, and illegal downloaders were also put out of business.


British spammer Peter Francis-Macrae (aka Weaselboy) was sentenced to six years in prison for fraud, falsely offering to “pre-register” domain names for businesses and individuals. Just last month illegal music downloaders experienced a shock. i-SAFE found that in Singapore’s latest crackdown police raided the homes of seven Internet users accused of downloading music and seized their computers. Five men and two women, ranging in ages from 14 to 32 years old, were arrested. But more

was to come.

Twenty-five more people were accused of illegally sharing thousands of music files over the Internet. The penalties are heavy. Under Singapore’s updated copyright law, any person convicted of downloading or sharing copyright music faces up to six months in jail and a fine of \$20,000. In February, two young men, aged 21 and 22, were the first to be sentenced to prison under the law, receiving three and four months, respectively, for illegally sharing music files over the Internet.

There are real consequences for bad behavior—even online. 

What’s New with i-SAFE?

i-SAFE is now global. Internet use crosses all borders, which means there is a need for Internet safety education across borders as well. With the i-SAFE International Education Program, i-SAFE’s world-class curriculum and professional development training is available for educators to use in their country’s classrooms around the world. 



The Power One—*Most Valuable Mentors Educates and Empowers*

Students are often more technologically adept than their parents. The truth is, as Internet access becomes more readily accessible to students, the so-called “Digital Divide” (i.e., the discrepancy between parents’ knowledge and use of technology and their children’s) is ever increasing. Unfortunately, many parents still think their homes are safe from the hazards of the external cyber world. Parents do not comprehend that the intimidation, coercion, and fear that exist on the Internet have real-world penalties for them and their families. That’s why it is critically significant to expose online risks for parents and share with them what is occurring online today!

Aura Lee, a teenager and October’s Most Valuable Mentor (MVM) from North Dakota, is a member of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), the career technology student organization. Aura Lee admits that when she first joined i-SAFE, she, like her parents, did not recognize the real threats that exist online.

“I had no idea that so many people are out there trying to trick kids into meeting them in real life.”

Since joining i-SAFE, Aura Lee has been on a mission to educate and empower students and parents throughout North Dakota about safe and responsible use online.

“All of my friends are online and using social networking sites like Myspace and Facebook. They use them to talk about their favorite music, TV shows, and just to keep in touch with all their friends. It’s scary to think that strangers can see that personal information that you put on your page intending it only for your friends.


“Parents need to become familiar with the risks and threats on the Internet and learn how they and their children can navigate Cyberspace safely,” she urged.

To help parents and students, Aura Lee participated this month in the Upper Great Plains Technology Conference & Trade Show, sponsored by United States Senator from North Dakota, Byron L. Dorgan. Aura Lee’s presentation on illegally downloading intellectual property online was a huge hit! Her dynamic presentation spoke directly to young people in a way that’s relevant to students today. She used true-life stories to impress on her audience how their online actions can have serious real-world consequences.

After participating in Aura Lee’s presentation and hearing about her experiences online, attendees have written in to i-SAFE letting us know how important it is to be safe and responsible online. Here are some testimonials that came from attendees.

1. **Never trust someone online that you do not know in real life.**
2. **It’s always important to keep your personal information to yourself.**
3. **Downloading files illegally online can be dangerous to your computer!**


One thing is for certain, there are very few barriers to keep our students out of trouble on the Internet. Technology (i.e., computers and the Internet) now permeates our society and individual lives to such a pervasive extent that every parent must, at the very least, get to know the basics of Internet safety. And, to protect our children from harm and proactively discourage risky online behavior, we must teach them how to recognize and avoid dangerous and unlawful online behavior and how to respond correctly.

The best solution—get involved with i-SAFE today and learn how to be safe and responsible online. 



Curriculum Bonus—*Word Bank*

What is it about puzzles that draws us in? Before you know it you are captivated and ten minutes have gone by! Well, we have one for you this month. If you love words and patterns you’ll make short work of our word bank. And the answers are all handy reminders of Internet perils and safety topics. Click the link, print the puzzle, pass it around.

Get your copy and get started by going to www.isafe.org/bonus. And don’t forget: past curriculum bonuses can be found there, too. 



Bumper Sticker Contest Winners

The winner has been named and i-SAFE has buckets full of bumper stickers. Our National Bumper Sticker Contest was a huge success. Students were asked to design a bumper sticker with a topic like social networking, piracy, cyber bullying, or online predators, or one of their own.

Entries flooded in from as far away as Alaska and Hawaii. We counted over 1,345 entries! It was truly exciting to see so many creative students take part.

And the i-SAFE Bumper Sticker Contest winners are:

4 For the Elementary level:

With her wonderful, “be safe, be happy,” bumper sticker, the award goes to Caroline from Atlanta, Georgia.


4 For the Jr. High level:

With his fancy artwork of, “the computer’s gonna get ya,” bumper sticker, the award goes to Dylan from Stuarts Draft, Virginia.

4 For the High School level:

With his subtle yet, “to the point,” bumper sticker, the award goes to Ellis from Meridian, Mississippi.

And now, for our Best In Show. This year’s i-SAFE National Bumper Sticker Contest Grand Prize winner is...Dylan, from Stuarts Draft, Virginia. Dylan will have his artwork reproduced into an actual bumper sticker for him and all his classmates. Congratulations, Dylan. Way to go!!!


A big congratulations and a “job well done” to all of you who entered this year’s i-SAFE bumper sticker contest. Now, let’s see if you guys can outdo yourselves. Read on... 




X-BLOCK Contest—Video Skit

Announcing the first ever i-SAFE Video Skit Contest – “i-SAFE Live!”

Teachers, your students now have a way to get creative while practicing safety online. Now it’s their turn to create a funny skit about online safety, record it on camera, and send it to i-SAFE. If their skit is a hit, we’ll feature it on the X-BLOCK Web site and i-DRiVE TV. Plus, your student will win the Most Valuable Mentor award!

It’s simple – it’s easy – it’s fun. Click here for details on how to enter. 

Team Up With i-SAFE

i-SAFE has reached over 2.2 million students with Internet safety information. By providing free materials, programs, and educational videos, students are learning how to make positive choices while using Internet technology. In order to bring our programs and materials to your community and your home, we rely upon donations. To donate, e-mail donations@isafe.org or go to www.isafe.org/donations. 

We Value Your Input

Do you have a question? Please e-mail us at editor@isafe.org with questions, comments, or contributions. If snail mail is your preference, write to: i-SAFE Editor, 5900 Pasteur Ct. Ste. 100, Carlsbad, CA 92008

About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in Internet safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences. i-SAFE provides knowledge that enables them to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior, and to respond appropriately. This is accomplished through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to students, parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. i-SAFE is the only Internet safety foundation to effectively combine these elements. www.isafe.org