Internet Safety Tips for Parents and Educators

2013-2014 Back to School & Year Round Edition

“Internet Safety Tips for Parents and Educators” is an article for parents, primary caregivers and educators addressing cyber attack prevention and internet safety. Authored by Michael Nuccitelli Psy.D., a New York State licensed psychologist and the author of iPredator, a new Information Age forensic construct. Dr. Nuccitelli provides internet safety tips and cyber attack prevention strategies to help insulate children from being cyber attacked by peers and adults engaged in online sexual predation.
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Back to School Internet Safety Tips for Year Round Application

Online Sexual Predators (aka iPredators) habitually prepare for children and teens, around the country, returning to school looking to the internet for their academic, social networking and developmental needs. The beginning of a new school year guarantees a significant increase in online usage, and most important to online sexual predators, patterned and predictable times of online usage. Now that children will be back to school, their time spent online significantly increases along with patterned and predictable times they access the internet. Online sexual predators, cyberbullies, cyber criminals and cyberstalkers ready themselves for another year of unsuspecting and ignorant groups of vulnerable, discouraged and online high risk taking children.

Provided below are 14 internet safety tips compiled by Michael Nuccitelli, Psy.D., a New York State licensed psychologist and author of the new Information Age forensics construct, iPredator. The internet safety tips and recommendations were compiled to assist adults insulate children from being cyber attacked and targeted by iPredators. Dr. Nuccitelli’s definition of iPredator is as follows:
iPredator Definition

**iPredator**: A person, group or nation who, directly or indirectly, engages in exploitation, victimization, coercion, stalking, theft or disparagement of others using Information and Communications Technology (ICT). iPredators are driven by deviant fantasies, desires for power and control, retribution, religious fanaticism, political reprisal, psychiatric illness, perceptual distortions, peer acceptance or personal and financial gain. iPredators can be any age or gender and are not bound by economic status, race, religion or national heritage.

iPredator is a global term used to distinguish anyone who engages in criminal, coercive, deviant or abusive behaviors using ICT. Central to the construct is the premise that Information Age criminals, deviants and the violently disturbed are psychopathological classifications new to humanity. Whether the offender is a cyberbully, cyberstalker, cyber harasser, cyber criminal, online sexual predator, cyber terrorist or engaged in internet defamation or nefarious cyber deception, they fall within the scope of iPredator. The three criteria used to define an iPredator include:

1. A self-awareness of causing harm to others, directly or indirectly, using ICT.  
2. The usage of ICT to obtain, tampers with, exchange and deliver harmful information.  
3. A general understanding of Cyberstealth used to engage in criminal or deviant activities or to profile, identify, locate, stalk and engage a target.

Unlike human predators prior to the Information Age, iPredators rely on the multitude of benefits offered by Information and Communications Technology (ICT). These assistances include exchange of information over long distances, rapidity of information exchanged and the seemingly infinite access to data available. Malevolent in intent, iPredators rely on their capacity to deceive others using ICT in the abstract and artificial electronic universe known as cyberspace. Therefore, as the internet naturally offers all ICT users anonymity, if they decide,
iPredators actively design online profiles and diversionary tactics to remain undetected and untraceable.

**Cyberstealth Definition**

*Cyberstealth*, a sub-tenet of iPredator, is a covert method by which iPredators attempt to establish and sustain complete anonymity while they engage in ICT activities planning their next assault, investigating innovative surveillance technologies or researching the social profiles of their next target. Concurrent with the concept of Cyberstealth is iPredator Victim Intuition (IVI). An iPredator’s IVI is their aptitude to sense a target’s ODDOR (Offline Distress Dictates Online Response), online & offline vulnerabilities, psychological weaknesses, technological limitations, increasing their success of a cyber-attack with minimal ramifications.

“Malevolent in intent, iPredators rely on their capacity to deceive others using information technology in the abstract and artificial electronic universe known as cyberspace. Therefore, as the internet naturally offers all ICT users anonymity, if they decide, iPredators actively design online profiles and diversionary tactics to remain undetected and untraceable.” Michael Nuccitelli Psy.D. C.F.C., iPredator Inc. (2013)

For proactive parents who plan to practice and institute internet safety, we have compiled a quick checklist and tips to help ensure your bases are covered. We hope this checklist helps insulate your child from abuse and leads to a safe and enjoyable school year.
1. FBI's Parents Internet Safety Guide: Visit the FBI's website and thoroughly read their excellent overview called "A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety". Before moving on to the next step, make sure you have written down and have easy access to your local police department's phone numbers. To download online, enter into Google or your favorite search engine the term "FBI Parents Guide". On the first page will be the link to read or download.

FBI Parent Guide Link
http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide

2. Offline Distress Dictates Online Response: A child is particularly prone to engage in high-risk behaviors online if he/she is feeling discouraged, angry or distressed. Do not move on to the next step until you are confident your child is feeling encouraged, stable or being monitored by a professional or trusted loved one. Of the many articles and studies we have researched, a child's psychological status highly correlates with their online behaviors. If there are ongoing conflicts at home, recent traumatic events or any other anxiety and/or distressing events in the home, it is very important to monitor your child's online usage.

Just as important as your child's home environment is your child's school environment. Given you cannot be with your child when they are at school, it is important to maintain regular contacts with school officials regarding your child's attitudes and behaviors on school grounds. Although academics in school are a priority, your child's demeanor with teachers and fellow students speaks to their psychological and emotional welfare. Research has directly linked a child's school and home environments to their online activities.
3. Personal Information Prevention Planning: The number one and most important issue to address with your child is the amount of personal information they share online. Getting your child to practice minimal release of their name, contact information, photographs and passwords to their social sites is highly desirable. If we were to make an approximation of the articles, we have read on Internet safety and cyber security, 99% percent of them list restriction of sharing personal information online being vital to Internet safety.

It cannot be emphasized enough, but children who disclose their contact information, personal information and images freely are at a much higher risk of being targeted by a iPredator. The goal as an internet safety proactive parent is not to totally restrict or forbade your child from sharing personal information, but to educate them on being highly cautious and consistently aware when, why and what they disclose to others.

***Research has demonstrated that the vast majority of taunting, abuse, cybercrime and sexual assault that children endure is most likely coming from their peers and/or known adults rather than unknown adult online sexual predators.***

Peers, Parents and the PTA

4. Peers, Parents and the PTA: Given that, you cannot monitor your child's online activities when they are not in your presence; it is paramount to access those people who are expected to be. Your child's friends, their parents and school are the three prime social targets you should be contacting. The goal is to initiate and sustain open communication with your child's friends and their parents regarding internet safety expectations. Just because you have restricted your child from certain online activities does not mean your child's friends are restricted or their parents have online house rules.
Using your capacity to be cordial and polite, maintain a consistent open dialogue with your child's social circles. Regarding your child's school environment, it is important to have an open conversation with school officials and/or the PTA to ensure that Internet safety and cyber security mechanisms are in place. Before the school year begins, contact school officials and investigate their internet safety measures, educational emphasis on Internet security and procedures for cyberbullying, cyberstalking, sexting, mobile device usage during school hours and cybercrime related to adolescent life.

Know Your Child's Social Networking Sites

5. **Know Your Child's Social Networking Sites**: As of 2013, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Tagged and MyYearbook are among the most popular social networking sites children and teens look to for their cyber identity, digital reputation and online social relationships. Thanks to the internet and digital technology, many children and teens look to the digital universe for their self-esteem. Unfortunately, iPredators also choose these sites as their most favored websites spending most of their free time trolling for unsuspecting, naive, discouraged or high-risk children. Given there are 400-500 popular global social sites, and growing, it is of the utmost importance to spend time with your child discussing digital citizenship and cautious online communications.

Smartphones and Cellphones Need More Smarts

6. **Smartphones and Cellphones Need More Smarts**: A smartphone is a wireless phone with voice, messaging, scheduling, e-mail and internet capabilities. Research and marketing trend experts' project sales of smartphones will exceed personal computers by 2014. In 2012, 697 million smartphones were sold. Despite the benefits of mobile digital technology, children and teens are becoming dependent on their mobile phones more than ever before.

Recent studies have suggested children who are depressed, anxious and/or discouraged spend more time interacting with their mobile devices and less time being typical children. It is vital that as a parent, you monitor the amount of time your child spends on their mobile phone and
contact your phone carrier about additional security features that they may offer. If a cellphone or smartphone is in your child's future, be sure to have the store you purchase the phone from install or set up all the necessary safety and filtering devices and software.

Weekly Digital Dinner

7. Weekly Digital Dinner: The term may sound absurd, but making it a habit to discuss the family's digital habits at least once weekly during dinner is both proactive and helpful. With today's dual parent working families and single parent households, dinnertime is one of the few weekly events that are consistent, predictable and social. By all family members discussing their internet activities, children will feel more comfortable to disclose information relevant to Internet safety and their online activities. During these weekly discussions, always make sure to discuss the importance of being highly cautious of sharing personal information online.

It is also highly recommended to discuss positive, beneficial aspects and stories about online usage to make the weekly discussions fair and balanced. Prior to every weekly digital dinner discussion, it is highly recommended to announce, to all involved, that any information shared regarding online activities will not cause punishment, retribution or embarrassment. This weekly announcement may be redundant, but it reaffirms to your children that they will not be punished for their mistakes or irresponsible online behaviors.

House Rules Include Online Rules

8. House Rules Include Online Rules: Just as children have curfews, responsibilities and chores, they also should have online rules and regulations. Based on our findings, there are no universal online rules that can be applied to children of all ages. The three that these writers feel are most relevant to children of all ages and at all times are as follows: 1. Cautious disclosure of sharing personal information online. 2. Never meeting someone met online without supervision. 3. Never share passwords to anyone other than parents. Other than this triad, parents should
establish house online rules based on their child's age, developmental maturity, knowledge and persistence of Internet safety.

In addition to the trifecta of obvious rules mentioned, research has led these writers to conclude that nighttime online usage and time patterns should be considered when negotiating or designing online rules. Research on iPredators have concluded that they prefer to troll for their victims during evening hours and at time intervals when the child or children they are targeting typically log on to the internet. The iPredator learns online log on habits and set their schedule to match the child they are targeting.

Emphasize the Child's Developmental Achilles Heel

9. **Emphasize the Child's Developmental Achilles Heel**: Part of being an effective parent is being a creative parent. All children, starting anywhere from 7-10 years of age, develop an accentuated self-awareness. Once this self-awareness begins, the child begins to worry how their peers perceive them. As they continue physical and psychological maturation, this strong focus on self-image, popularity and peer acceptance becomes their primary driving forces until they have finished college. Knowing your child will probably be experiencing these highly dramatic and emotions, you can use them advantageously regarding their online activities.

Instead of telling your child "NO", educate them on how images and information we share online can last for years. Just as rumors of friends spread, online rumors and embarrassing images can go "viral". Directly connecting your child's developmental fears to their online behaviors of disclosing information is an effective and natural internet safety technique. When done in a considerate, respectful way, this method for teaching your child to be cautious of sharing personal information can be highly effective.
Online Parental Control? No Such Thing

10. Online Parental Control? No Such Thing: With the trends of today's online community and technological advancements, insulating your child from iPredators and keeping them safe online has been ever more challenging. Ranging from home computers to mobile digital technology, children have access and exposure to multiple forms of online activities and devices. Even if you use content blockers, filters, trackers or parental control software, children have ways to get around these if their heart and minds are set on engaging in high-risk online activities.

Before purchasing security software or hardware, contact a trusted source. In every community, someone, your friends or a colleague knows a digital technology expert. Given that the market is flooded with hundreds of products, services and methods contact your local expert source and rely on their recommendations. Secondly, contact your phone and Internet Service Provider (ISP) for what they recommend to protect your child.

iPredator Inc.’s Parent Internet Safety Guide

11. iPredator Inc.’s Parent Internet Safety Guide: The iPredator Inc. Parent Internet Safety Guide is a web page and online article available for download, at no cost, at iPredator Inc.’s internet safety website. Regularly updated, the web article is monitored for accuracy and relevance as the Information Age continues to evolve. To assist parents, primary caregivers and educators, the article provides internet safety tips, online sexual predator prevention tips, iPredator target factors and cyberbullying tactics. As Information and Communications Technology (ICT) becomes widespread, cyber attack prevention, education and protection are areas that will require immediate attention.
The Information Age has many benefits to humanity, but it is vital to identify and prevent the malevolent and nefarious elements that exist in cyberspace. The link is provided here, scroll to the base of the web page and click on the green pdf/print button. Interested parties can download the web page article and no personal information is required for download. To download online, enter into Google or your favorite search engine the term “Parents Internet Safety Packet | iPredator”.

iPredator Parent Internet Safety Guide
http://www.ipredator.co/ipredator/internet-safety/parents/

Mobile Devices, Mobile Children, Focused Parents

12. Mobile Devices, Mobile Children, Focused Parents: It is not hard to conclude that protecting children from the growing number of cyber attack avenues is daunting at best. Mobile Device Technology and Smartphones is quickly becoming the tool of choice for accessing and interacting in cyberspace. The trend projections of mobile device usage are astounding in which children will be a large mobile user demographic. With this inevitability, children will be left to defend themselves interacting with cyberspace for increasing periods without adult supervision.

Making matters worse, online sexual predators, cyber criminals and iPredators who target children are gleefully preparing for this shift in pediatric mobile device usage. It is crucial for all parents and adults to take the active role in ensuring the mobile device(s) given to children are purchased with the most advanced security and parental controls available. These writers cannot not emphasize enough how important it is to, not just verify the child’s mobile device is secure, but regularly monitored and habitually checked to make sure the child’s device has not been compromised.

13. **Internet Addiction**: Not that it has recently materialized without notice, but Internet Use Disorder, Internet Use Gaming Disorder and Internet Addiction are all synonymous terms defining the same growing trend of pathological usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Although a persistent controversy exists regarding Internet Addiction being a formal mental illness, the reality is there are thousands of online users, child and adult, who report experiencing signs and symptoms quite similar to the hallmark elements of a compulsive dependency.

Contemporary Information Age society has now been introduced to Internet Addiction. Internet Addiction and its psychopathology underpinnings is a new mental illness for a new societal paradigm. Until a final determination is made on whether Internet Addiction is an actual diagnosis, potentially taking years of debate, available to parents, at no cost, is this writer’s risk assessment available for download called the Internet Addiction Risk Checklist (IARC). The link is provided here, scroll to the base of the web page and click on the green pdf/print button. To download online, enter into Google or your favorite search engine the term “Internet Addiction Risk Checklist (IARC)”. Interested parties can download the web page article and no personal information is required for download.

**Internet Addiction Risk Checklist**


“Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism.” Carl Jung (1871-1961)
The Cyberbullying Reich

14. The Cyberbullying Reich: As defined by Wikipedia, “Reich” is defined as a German word that roughly is translated to mean "nation" or "realm". Given this form of pediatric abuse occur in the abstract artificial realm of cyberspace and growing at an alarming rate, the use of “Reich” seems apropos. Cyberbullying and both child aggressor and victim are new to humanity. Unknown to humanity is the impact of cyberbullying on future humanity. Although traditional bullying has existed since the inception of human civilization, the Information Revolution has made this form of “child on child abuse” just beginning to be addressed by contemporary society. What has to be experienced is the inevitable reality of cyberbully aggressors and victims growing into adults armed with years of experience in the realm of cyber abuse.

Unlike traditional bullying, occurring prior to the Information Age at schools, playgrounds and sports fields, cyberbullying is a 24/7/365 phenomenon leaving no respite for the child victim. Information technology has many benefits to humanity, but it is vital to identify and prevent the malevolent and nefarious elements that exist in cyberspace. To assist parents and primary caregivers, this writer offers, at no cost, his web page article titled “Cyberbullying Tactics” for download. To download online, enter into Google or your favorite search engine the term “Cyberbullying Tactics”. Once at the site, scroll to the base of the web page and click on the green pdf/print button. Interested parties can download the web page article and no personal information is required for download.

Cyberbullying Tactics
http://www.ipredator.co/ipredator/cyber-bullying/cyberbullying-tactics/

Note to Reader
Dr. Nuccitelli has provided you with a comprehensive and effective internet safety tips checklist to help reduce the chances a child becomes a target of online sexual predators, cyberbullies and/or cyberstalkers. The internet, digital technology and mobile devices will continue to
influence all children, as their peers, advertising and cultural trends place pressure upon them to have the latest trending technology and access to the most popular social networking sites.

If it has not happened already, it is likely your child will approach you, on numerous occasions, pleading for the newest digital technology and/or wanting to join the growing number of social sites that will be in fashion in the future. The key to being a proactive parent is making the effort to learn about iPredators, Internet Safety, Cyber Attack Prevention and signs of Internet Addiction. The most important Internet safety advice to protect your child can be summed up in one statement:

“An iPredator will always move on to other victims when a parent takes the time to be involved, preventative and protective. Being an internet safety savvy and iPredator aware parent does not guarantee absolute online safety for your child, but it certainly reduces the odds. Not being a gambling man, I will always bet on the parent winning who makes the effort to protect their child as they travel the growing cyber universe.” Michael Nuccitelli, Psy.D. iPredator Inc. (2013)

PROTECT, PREVENT & PREVAIL OVER IPREDATORS!
iPredator Inc. is a New York State based Information Age Forensics Company founded to provide educational and advisory products & services to online users, consumers and organizations on cyberbullying, cyber harassment, cyberstalking, cybercrime, internet defamation, cyber terrorism, online sexual predation and cyber deception. Created by a NYS licensed psychologist and certified forensic consultant, Michael Nuccitelli Psy.D., C.F.C., their goal is to reduce victimization, theft and disparagement from online assailants.

In addition to assisting citizens, iPredator Inc.’s mission is to initiate a nationally sustained internet safety and cyber attack prevention educational & awareness campaign with the help of private, state and federal agencies. Dr. Nuccitelli can be reached at DrNucc@iPredatorInc.com. Their website, www.iPredator.co, offers site visitors an enormous database, at no cost or personal information disclosure, on Information Age Forensics, Internet Safety and iPredator Profiling.

For consumers seeking internet safety education and cyber-attack protection, feel free to read about iPredator Inc.’s innovative advisory-based membership service called, iPredator Protected. With the growth and expansion of social media, Dr. Nuccitelli and iPredator Inc. offers a unique assessment service called the iPredator Facebook Safety Analysis (iFSA). In addition to offering advice, education and investigation, Dr. Nuccitelli has designed 26 internet safety and cyber attack prevention checklists and inventories (IISC & IPI Collections). iPredator Inc. also offers abridged versions (IISC Collection-Abridged) that are less expensive and geared more for individual online users. All of Dr. Nuccitelli’s checklists and inventories were designed for assessment, diagnostics, education and prevention education.

Dr. Nuccitelli can be reached at DrNucc@iPredatorInc.com. Their website, www.iPredator.co, offers site visitors an enormous database on Cyber Criminal Psychology, Internet Safety and iPredictors. Although iPredator Inc. has joined a multitude of social networking sites, feel free to visit their social sites planned to be their major information and announcement vehicles.

- Google +: The iPredator
- Facebook: The iPredator
- LinkedIn: The iPredator
- Twitter: @TheiPredator
- Pinterest: iPredator
- Google + Community: iPredator
- Google + Community: Dark Psychology

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