Navigating Today's Technology

Safety for Teens & Tweens

Ed de la Fuente

To the reader:

This guide is just that, *a guide.* It is not a catch-all that will get you effortlessly to understand what your children are doing and protect them. It has been compiled from information I have obtained through my years of working in the Millburn Police Department Juvenile Aid Bureau. Some of the information has been learned from working actual investigations or other real life situations I have been involved in. Much of the rest of the information has been acquired from the following sources:

- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- New Jersey State Police
- Essex County Prosecutors Office
- Morris County Prosecutors Office
- Union County Prosecutors Office
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
- Other professionals in law enforcement and the private sector (including my own brother) who have added to, critiqued and help me modify this

This handout is a work in progress. It changes year to year as technology changes and as I continue to learn. Again, this is a guide to help you navigate your way *with* your children.

You may notice some sections that are directed toward children. My intentions are for you to use this guide *with* your children.

Texting

I feel there are many issues around texting that endanger our children needlessly.

For simplicity, I will group chatting (such as SNAPCHAT) together with text messaging from cell phones. Once a message is typed and "Enter" is pressed, the message is sent "instantly." As a parent, you should be aware of what your child is doing on the computer or smart phone, with whom, and for how long. I take an unstructured survey of my DARE students each year as to how much time they spend messaging each day. Some have indicated they use it for up to **FIVE HOURS** each day.

Problems:

- **Language:** Kids today use language that we, as adults, did not use when we were their age. The influence from music, movies, television, and the Internet is obvious when we listen to young people talk today. When you remove the face-to-face interaction, the language changes even more. Many kids "talk" via technology in a way they would never think of face to face and certainly not in front of their parents or teachers. The schoolyard threat of, "I'll get you," can change to "I will come to your house and kill you," when the sender feels the protection of the Internet.

- **Anonymity:** When a child is texting, he does not really know with whom he is communicating. It could be the account holder, or that person's sibling or other friends. Because there is no face there, the sender may have lesser inhibitions and may be more likely to engage in inappropriate conversations.

- **Emotionless:** Texting lacks what most adults consider to be communication; that is feedback from the other party. Eye contact, facial expression, and body language are just a few of the cues we use to read if our message is being understood. Text users often are "multitasking" with television, multiple IM recipients, and homework while they type. They can use emoticons- symbols to represent facial expressions :-), change font type, color, and size to indicate emotions, but the users still do not get much feedback. As a result, disagreements often escalate to anger, fury, and threats because the participants have no idea when they have gone too far.

- **Impersonation:** When one child goes online impersonating another, they often insult, harass, or sometimes threaten others, pretending to be another user.
    - **Shared Passwords:** Many young people, especially girls, share their secrets, including passwords, with their closest friends. When friendships fracture, best friends can become worst enemies.
    -

- **Sharing phones:** This can be especially problematic when children first get cell phones. They pass the phones around so others can compare who has the better phone. Often prank calls or texts are sent while the phone is out of the hands of the owner The owner may be held responsible for misuse.

Difficulty in Investigation: Often, Cellular Providers and Internet Service Providers (ISP's) do not retain any instant messaging content. There are literally millions upon millions of texts sent everyday that would have to be archived. When an investigation is initiated, often there is little, if any, evidence to help. Often, law enforcement must conduct a forensic examination of a computer or phone, a costly and time-consuming undertaking, to learn the truth.

My recommendation is that young children do not use text messaging. Such uses are often the origins of fights and misunderstandings that could have been prevented or addressed had the parties actually spoken to one another.

Allowing a 13 year old to use such a powerful tool as the internet *without any restrictions*, may be dangerous. They need to **be responsible** before they can use something **responsibly**.

That said, I also accept the fact that some will choose to allow chatting anyway. If you feel you must give in, at least try to enforce the following:

If you must text, do it with only people you know. (Make sure that you have already confirmed it is someone you know).   Don't text or respond to texts from strangers. If someone is bothering you, notify the Cellular Provider and your parents. Do not engage in arguments or threatening language while chatting. An Internet threat is as serious as one face to face.

Propositions / Predators
Many times people with less than sincere intentions will try to poke around seeking a hobby or interest you might have.

These people network with each other and share information **_about YOU!_** The next "stranger" who contacts you may already have a long background about you and may know exactly what to talk about with you.

Texting with someone you do not know can put you in a vulnerable situation

<u>*Watch for questions like these*</u>

"What school do you go to? What time to you get home?"

"What do you like to do in your spare time?"

"Where do you shop, eat, go to movies?"

"You seem upset. Did you have a fight with your Mom or Dad?"

"Where do your parents work? Do they both work?"

"Got a nice pic of yourself to send me?

All of these give away clues about you and your family.

** Predators will often exaggerate a dispute between kids and parents to cause a teen to withdraw from the normal support network of a family. The predator convinces the teen that he is the only one who cares and can be trusted.

Anonymity
Don't give out details about yourself!
Starting with your ID. By calling yourself SEXYONE@user.com, HOT69@user.com you open yourself up to problems.

I have seen similar screen ID's used by *young teen girls* in my investigations.

Also using your name in a screen ID is a bad idea. Ex: JessieJone@user.com

NEVER give out any personal information. If it is someone you know, they would already know this information and never need to request it again.

Profiles alone are not the only thing that is dangerous. Websites allow people to figure out who you are and where you live (**Facebook, Instagram, Ask.fm, Formspring**)

Update Status– Away messages are not a good idea, just log off. Putting that you "Went to Bonzai for Dinner" or "Gone to Mike's House", tells strangers what you like and that you are not home.

Something Doesn't Feel Right

Don't be afraid to tell someone that something weird has taken place on your computer through texts, e-mail, or social media. Some on-line providers have a button to hit to flag a company representative that you are having a problem. Also let your parents know. They can contact some other authorities (so can you) to help. Save your work by printing out the screen on paper and saving the logs to disk.

If you are uncomfortable with something, GO TO your parents. Let an adult tell you it is something or nothing, especially if you are being threatened, stalked or harassed. ***** Harassment and/or threats must be reported ******

Being Comfortable

If someone asks you to

- *Send them a photo of you.*
- *Send a photo of you minus a few articles of clothing.*
- *Asked you about sex or sexual acts.*
- *Wants to send you inappropriate photos .*

TELL YOUR PARENTS!

E-Mail

E-Mails have many hidden problems with them. Some of the most common problems we have encountered are as follows:

a. The Forward Chain

Many companies get your e-mail address from countless *FORWARDS* that someone has sent you and you have sent someone else. Don't buy into these. The most common is a friend sending you a forwarded e-mail. Some programs are sent in e-mails which record all of the e-mail addresses attached, making you a target for additional e-mails and possible hoaxes. If the sender is a friend, let him or her know that you are NOT interested in receiving mail like that. If you do not know the sender, delete it, block the sender, and DO NOT RESPOND. Responding lets them know that have found an e-mail with activity. Don't be fooled by superstitious e-mails. Also be cautious of e-mails with helpful tips that have been forwarded hundreds of times.

   I received an e-mail alleging to be from the Make A Wish Foundation, instructing me to forward the e-mail of the cute little girl and each time ten cents would be added to her wish fund. I was skeptical so I called Make A Wish. They confirmed that it was bogus and that they do not designate any fund raising for one specific child.

- **Watch what happens after you forward this to ten people (nothing except lots of unwanted e-mail)**
- **The brother of the King of Saudi Arabia doesn't really need YOU to help him get money into the USA**

b. Viruses

Viruses can come with e-mail. The downloading of files such as pictures, sound or video can contain viruses. There are Trojan horses that can give anonymous persons control of your computer. This control allows them to view your files and personal information. Many times your friends will send you sound files and or pictures. Always virus scan them. Another problem is companies that give away Term Papers. They may also include a virus in the file that wrecks all of your other documents files.

A Good policy is that if you don't recognize the sender of an e-mail or the subject line, then DELETE IT. If you continue to get annoying e-mail, notify the ISP Internet Service Provider.

In general, tell your friends to always include something specific in the subject such as their pet's name, etc. to indicate the e-mail really came from them, especially when there is an attachment. Never accept or send generic looking e-mails that have attachments and no body.

NEVER click on a link embedded in an e-mail when that link to a website asks you to login. If you need to go to a specific website, go to that site through your normal channels directly. Often scammers will send you bogus links in e-mail that go to their own version of the sign on screen, such as the E-Bay login screen. They are capturing your login information and can use it to gain control of your account. Embedded links often appear in blue such as: www.fbi.gov

School Work & Projects

When doing web related work for school, such as building a web site or developing some web related materials, always check to see how much information you want to put out on the site. Have your parents review your work before you put it out on the web for others to view.

Passwords & Identity Theft:

Never give out your password to anyone for any reason.
This can allow them to assume your identity and (if they wanted to) do some pretty nasty things. If your have a primary account this could jeopardize all of the accounts that have been set up.
As an example, say someone gets your sign-on and password, they could harass other people and do illegal things in your name. Then YOU are stuck trying to either defend yourself or prove it was not you.
- Change your password at least once per month.
- When over a friend's house, don't share passwords, ASK FOR or EXPECT a moment of privacy to sign on when using a computer.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Young people seem especially enamored with using social media. They posts information about their everyday activities, trials and tribulations, likes, and dislikes, just to name a few. It becomes a competition to see who has more friends, more "likes," more comments, etc. They often seek social validation through technology, rather than face to face.

facebook.

Many parents are on Facebook; some socially and some to try to stay on top of what their kids are doing. Many users, old and young, put far too much personal information on the internet, viewable by the world. Be sure that privacy settings are for "friends only" and check those settings regularly. Facebook often does updates and settings may change without your knowledge. Many young people post pictures of alcohol and drug use and show their daily activities without concern about who can see it. Colleges and prospective employers view Facebook profiles all the time to help make decisions about candidates.

Instagram

Many parents have heeded the warning by law enforcement and educators that young children should not be on Facebook. However, when the children ask for an Instagram account, permission is often granted. Instagram is pretty much Facebook. As a matter of fact, Facebook owns Instagram. Many young people migrated away from using Facebook because they are looking for something more interesting and because they learned that we (the adults) were on Facebook. The same security and privacy risks exist as in Facebook. The greater concern is that Instagram is almost entirely based to be used from a smart phone, rather than a computer. As a result, the vigilant parents who followed their children on Facebook have been left in their dust because they cannot figure out how to navigate Instagram. I have found many Instagram users have no privacy settings. I was not only able to see their pictures, but have been able to locate GPS coordinates of where their pictures were taken.

Vine

Vine is like Youtube. It is an application that allows users to create short, looping (repeating) videos and share them. While the intentions may have been to allow users to share their creativity, it has been used to document fights and other offenses and humiliate the victims.

twitter

Twitter allows users to posts their thoughts and activities, minute by minute. I don't understand how people have the time to post all day long. Nor do I understand whose life is so interesting that I would want to read what they do all day. If there is a fear of "Big Brother" watching everything that we do, users should be aware that such a stream of consciousness sharing prevents us from having any real privacy.

****Young users of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter often "check in" to locations (such as a restaurant) and check in together. This lets other users (and friends) know that they were not included in that particular social event. This often leads to jealousy and anger by those who were excluded.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a photomessaging application. Users send messages attached to a picture or short video taken with the smartphone. The image disappears within a few seconds (1 to 10 seconds, time set by the user). This is an application which was used to circulate inappropriate pictures of a girl from Ridgewood High in 2013. The recipients performed "screen shots" when the picture showed up, enabling them to be saved and resent.

ask.fm   formspring

Ask.fm and Formspring (now called Spring.me) are virtually identical. Users to set up profiles and others can **anonymously** post questions and comments to the user. These often start out with "What is your favorite food?" or "Who do you think is cute?" It very quickly progresses to harassment, cyberbullying, and threats. Unfortunately Ask.fm is based in Latvia and it does not appear that they will honor American court orders for information such as subpoenas and search warrants, making investigations very difficult.

Yikyak is a relatively new application (developed in 2013). It is like an anonymous Twitter. It allows users to post **anonymously**, but it also puts users in touch with each other based on nearby geography determined by GPS in the device. It has already caused problems with bullying and threats. Yikyak has made efforts to reduce some of these problems by finding school zones and prohibiting interaction within those confines.

Quick Tips and Suggestions

- *Keep the family computer in a common area. If it must be in a child's room, the child's back should be toward the door and the door should be open*

- Limit the amount of computer time per day

- Make online or technology fun an earned reward. Consider rewarding a 10 minute "chip" for completing a homework assignment or chore. Kids can redeem "chips" for game time, etc.

- Do not share passwords

- Use the computer with the children

- Know how to contact your Internet Provider

- Notify Internet Provider of any inappropriate material

- Avoid E-mail and Texting Gossip (at all ages) – Just because someone sent you an e-mail does not mean that it is true!

- Do not forward "Good luck," "special friend," "hug," or chain letter e-mails

CHAT ABBREVIATIONS

121	one to one
AFAIK	as far as I know
AFK	away from keyboard
AKA	also known as
ARE	acronym-rich environment
ASAP	as soon as possible
A/S/L?	age, sex, location
B4	before
B4N	bye for now
BAK	back at the keyboard
BBIAB	be back in a bit
BBL	be back later
BBML	be back much later
BBN	bye bye now
BBS	be back soon
BEG	big evil grin
BF	boyfriend
BFN	bye for now
BG	big grin
BL	belly laughing
BRB	be right back
BTA	but then again
BTW	by the way
BWL	bursting with laughter
BWTHDIK	but what the heck do I know
C&G	chuckle & grin
CID	crying in disgrace
CNP	continued (in my) next post
CP	chat post
CRBT	crying real big tears
CSG	chuckle, snicker, grin
CU	see you
CUL or CUL8ER	see you later
CUZ	because
CYO	see you online
DIKU	do I know you?

DL	dead link
DLTBBB	don't let the bed bugs bite
DQMOT	don't quote me on this
EG	evil grin
EMFBI	excuse me for butting in
EOM	end of message
EOT	end of thread
F2F	face to face
FAQ	frequently asked question(s)
FC	fingers crossed
FISH	first in, still here
FMTYEWTK	far more than you ever wanted to know
FOMCL	falling off my chair laughing
FTBOMH	from the bottom of my heart
FUD	fear, uncertainty, and doubt
FWIW	for what it's worth
FYI	for your information
GA	go ahead
GAL	get a life
GD&R	grinning, ducking, & running
GF	girlfriend
GFN	gone for now
GIWIST	gee, I wish I'd said that
GMBO	giggling my butt off
GMTA	great minds think alike
GOL	giggling out loud
GTRM	going to read mail
GTSY	glad to see you
H&K	hug and kiss
HAGN	have a good night
HHIS	hanging head in shame
HTH	hope this helps
IAC	in any case
IAE	in any event
IANAL	I am not a lawyer (but)
IC	I see
IDK	I don't know
IHA	I hate acronyms

IIRC	if I remember correctly
ILU	I love you
IM	instant message
IMHO	in my humble opinion
Iming	chatting with someone online
IMNSHO	in my not so humble opinion
IMO	in my opinion
IOW	in other words
IPN	I'm posting naked
IRL	in real life
IWALU	I will always love you
IYSWIM	if you see what I mean
JBOD	just a bunch of disks
JIC	just in case
JK	just kidding
JMO	just my opinion
JTLYK	just to let you know
JW	just wondering
K	okay
KIT	keep in touch
KOC	kiss on cheek
KOL	kiss on lips
KWIM	know what I mean?
L2M	listening to music
L8R	later
LD	later, dude
LDR	long distance relationship
LHM	lord help me
LHU	lord help us
LLTA	lots and lots of thunderous applause
LMIRL	let's meet in real life
LMSO	laughing my socks off
LOL	laughing out loud
LRF	little rubber feet
LSHMBB	laughing so hard my belly is bouncing
LSHMBH	laughing so hard my belly hurts
LSHTTARDML	laughing so hard the tears are running down my leg
LTM	laugh to myself

LTNS	long time, no see
LTR	long term relationship
LTS	laughing to self
LULAB	love you like a brother
LULAS	love you like a sister
LUWAMH	love you with all my heart
LY	love you
M/F	male or female
MOSS	member of same sex
MOTOS	member of the opposite sex
MSG	message
MTF	more to follow
MUSM	miss you so much
NADT	not a darn thing
NIFOC	naked in front of computer
NP	nosy parents
N/P	no problem
NRN	no reply necessary
OIC	oh I see
OL	old lady
OLL	online love
OM	old man
OMG	oh my god
OTF	off the floor
OTOH	on the other hand
OTTOMH	off the top of my head
P2P	peer to peer
P911	my parents are coming!
PA	parent alert
PAL	parents are listening
PANB	parents are nearby
PANS	pretty awesome new stuff
PDA	public display of affection
PDS	please don't shoot
PLZ	please
PM	private message
PMFJIB	pardon me for jumping in but….

PMP	peed my pants
POAHF	put on a happy face
POS	parent over shoulder
POTS	plain old telephone service
PU	that stinks
QSL	reply
QSO	conversation
QT	cutie
RL	real life
ROL	raffing out loud
ROTFL	rolling on the floor laughing
RPG	role playing games
RSN	real soon now
RYO	roll your own
S4L	spam for life
SETE	smiling ear to ear
SF	surfer friendly
SHCOON	shoot hot coffee out of nose
SHID	slaps head in disgust
SNERT	snot nosed egotistical rude teenager
SO	significant other
SOMY	sick of me yet?
SOT	short of time
SOTMG	short of time, must go
STW	search the web
SUP or WU	what's up
SWAK	sealed with a kiss
SWL	screaming with laughter
SYS	see you soon
TA	thanks again
TAFN	that's all for now
TAW	teachers are watching
TCOB	taking care of business
TCOY	take care of yourself
TFH	thread from hell
TGIF	thank God it's Friday
THX	thanks
TIA	thanks in advance

TILII	tell it like it is
TLK2UL8R	talk to you later
TMI	too much information
TNT	'till next time
TOPCA	'til our paths cross again
TOY	thinking of you
TPTB	the powers that be
TTFN	ta ta for now
TTT	thought that too
TTYL	talk to you later
TU	thank you
UW	you're welcome
VBG	very big grin
WB	welcome back
WDALYIC	who died and left you in charge?
W/E	whatever
WFM	works for me
WIBNI	wouldn't it be nice if
WTG	way to go
WTGP	want to go private?
WTH	what/who the heck
WUF	where are you from?
WYSIWYG	what you see is what you get
YBS	you'll be sorry
YG	young gentleman
YL	young lady
YM	young man

I also urge you to get a free download of 100 more pages of abbreviations

http://www.spectorsoft.com/FreeLingoGuide.asp

******* Suggested Viewing *************

I strongly urge parent to watch the following, which can be viewed free on the internet. It is very applicable to the activity in our community.

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline/

Sample Family Cell Phone / Technology Contract

1)   ***** will pay $10.00 each month to Mom & Dad for use of this cell phone.
2)   *****will not send/receive pictures that are inappropriate (or pictures of girls) (Inappropriate is anything that you would not want to share with your parents)
3)   ***** will not use inappropriate language when texting and if someone sends him a text with inappropriate language (including curse words) then ***** will text back the following: "My parents read all my texts please do not curse."
4)   My phone will stay downstairs when I go to bed (friends' phones as well if they are staying over).
5)   I will not use my phone past 9pm on weeknights and 10pm on weekends.
6)   I will not ERASE any texts, pictures or calls until either Mom or Dad has reviewed them.
7)   If you type it, then there is a permanent record of it and it is considered to be the truth & serious ("it was a joke", "we were joking" is not acceptable)
8)   At any time my parents ask, I must hand over my phone immediately!
9)   No downloading/purchasing ring tones, ring backs, etc without permission from Mom or Dad.
10)   Mom & Dad have the right to revise this contract as they decide at any time.
11)   The cell phone is a privilege and can be taken away at any time, therefore do not abuse the privilege.
12)   Punishment for anything that goes against this contract is determined by Mom and/or Dad at the time of the offense.

Signed By:

_____   _____
Child   Date   Parent   Date

                                            _____
                                            Parent   Date