

## Internet Safety Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 1 \* May 2008\*

Brought to you by the FLVS Internet Safety Committee



### Social Networking: Playing and Staying Safe On-line

Social networking sites are one of the hottest trends in making new friends and getting connected with others. Sites like MySpace and Facebook encourage people to share information about themselves through instant message, chat rooms, blogs, and email. However, these personal exchanges can do more than promote pals. It can open the door to those with bad intentions - from peers to sexual predators.

Children under age 14 are restricted from registering on many social networking sites, however, there is no way to verify anyone's age. So, if your child is not of age, consider using parental control tools. These tools limit a child from viewing certain sites from his/her home computer. Settings are password protected. Remember – no program is a substitute for parental supervision.

If you are going to allow the use of social networking sites, use the privacy settings that limit who can view the child's site. Using privacy tools allows parents to approve which clubs, school friends, teams, and community groups are able to view their child's profile, or block individuals from accessing the information. Be aware of the images your child is posting to the Web. Pay attention to the photos that are being posted from your child's cell phone and webcam.

Often times, without their knowledge, it poses a risk by exposing them to strangers and on-line predators. Students should be aware that posting inappropriate photos can lead to damaged reputations, unwanted attention, even suspension or expulsion from school. Remember that once information is posted on the internet, its out there forever. Once modified or deleted from a website, an older version may still exist on someone's computer. Surf, search, socialize and stay safe!

### A Net Gain?

Social networks like MySpace and Facebook are fun for sharing personal info. But there is a cost. A 2006 CareerBuilder.com survey of hiring managers found about two-thirds rejected someone after a web search. Now firms like Reputation- Defender and DefendMyName will clean up your online mess. Just don't make one. - Kathryn M. Tyrans  
Readers Digest

### Student Safety Tips:

- Do not share personal information with anyone, including name, age, address, telephone number, parent/guardian's name, and school
- If you feel threatened online, logoff immediately and tell an adult. Report Threatening interactions online by saving e-mails, instant messages, taking screen shots
- Never download anything from anyone you do not know. Remember that in addition to offensive content, spam or junk mail may contain viruses that can damage your computer.

### CHECK OUT THESE SITES FOR MORE SAFETY TIPS

[www.ikeepsafe.org](http://www.ikeepsafe.org)

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

[www.enough.org](http://www.enough.org)

[www.i-safe.org](http://www.i-safe.org)

[www.teenangels.org](http://www.teenangels.org)

[www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

[www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org)