

## **Protecting Children From Online Dangers**

*By Brian Hamilton*

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*What every parent should know about Internet safety and tips for keeping them safe while on the Web*

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### **PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ONLINE DANGERS**

What every parent should know about Internet safety and tips for keeping them safe while on the Web

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — There are many things parents can do to protect children from getting into situations that they should not be in. Being a father of four, three of which are computer savvy, I do everything I can to prevent them from being exposed to the harms one can find on the Web.

According to [www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org), a 2005 study of children in grades 5 through 12 revealed that 58% of children admit to using the Internet unsafely, inappropriately or illegally. It's a parent's job to take the responsibility and know what their children are doing when they are on the Internet. Children can easily say they are doing research for homework, but unless parents look for themselves, children may be chatting with a complete stranger.

If your child uses instant messaging programs, be aware of who they are talking to as well as the lingo and acronyms kids use. It's also a good idea for the family computer to be in a room that has the most traffic. Kids will be less inclined to look at something they know they shouldn't if the chances of someone walking in are high.

Windows XP has decent content controls for Internet Explorer, but they are limited. Using this in conjunction with retail parental control software can create filters to unapproved prevent content from appearing in the browser. Windows Vista also provides parental controls built in that allows users to decide everything a child can do online. With this program, parents can control what programs children are allowed to open, what they deem as acceptable viewing content, and what times they are allowed to use the computer.

If the family computer has a Web cam, be aware that other dangers exist. It is imperative that parents keep a close watch on it. Predators that hang out in chat rooms tend to be drawn to users that have their Web cams on. Vistas' parental controls can block access to the Web cam as well as other programs that could be used to broadcast the Web cam's video and images.

As mentioned before, retail filtering software such as Net Nanny help filter out words and phrases that

pertain to content you don't want your children to see. You can also install a key logging program on your computer. These programs monitor all activity on your computer. Everything from keystrokes to Web addresses are logged and stored in a file for parents to view. This is handy if a parent feels like their child may already be talking to a stranger on the Internet.

The No. 1 way to protect your children from online predators is to talk to them. Let them know that while the Internet is a great source of information, it can also be a dangerous, if not deadly, place. For more tips on Internet safety and ways to protect personal online information, contact B-Tech Computer Repair.

B-Tech Computer Repair was founded out of the desire to help customers solve their computer needs with the understanding that quick and reliable service is a top priority. The company, serving Upstate South Carolina and portions of North Carolina, offers a variety of services ranging from data recovery and virus removal to custom built computers and home theater installation. In-home and online consultations are available. Please contact Brian Hamilton for more information regarding services and pricing.

If you would like more information on this topic, please contact Brian Hamilton at (864) 252-7030, or e-mail him at [brian@btechprepair.com](mailto:brian@btechprepair.com).

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