



## Be S.M.A.R.T.

### 5 Online Safety Tips for Your Family

As the Internet population continues to rapidly increase, the need for Internet Safety is even more critical. Whether you are a parent, teen or senior, here are simple steps you can take to protect yourself from encountering a sticky situation online. Remember that the moment something is posted online, it's there forever and the world knows about it. Be S.M.A.R.T. online.

What is S.M.A.R.T.?

**Share** information responsibly

**Monitor** your time and surfing habits

**Avoid** bad neighborhoods

**Remain** calm

**Think** family first

#### **1. Share information responsibly**

Whether you are texting, blogging, instant messaging, twittering, emailing or just plain communicating online, you need to be careful what personal information you are sharing. Now only because your information can be intercepted, but because you truly never know who the person on the other side could be. The next time you send a message, think about what personal information you are sharing. If you need to share sensitive information with a friend or a business, then setup a face-to-face meeting, use a secured online connection or call on a landline.

(continued)

How much time do you spend online? Where do you spend most of your time online? Moderation is the key to life and if you are surfing the Internet too much, it isn't good for your health. Take an eye break and walk away from your computer/mobile device at least once every hour. Parents, require your children to surf online in an open supervised area. Also, [install tracking software to monitor](#) and block Internet and mobile surfing.

### 3. Avoid bad neighborhoods

Just like in real life, you could turn a corner and end up in a bad neighborhood, but unlike real life, there are tell tale signs you're in a bad area online. First of all, a good tip is if you making a purchase online look for an "https" in your browser address bar. Question websites that ask for too much information. For example, banking websites that ask you to re-enter your account information. Why would they need your full account information? If you start experiencing many pop-up windows, you may be in a bad neighborhood. Best bet is to do a Google Search on the subject you are interested in and preview the website by viewing the "Cached" link before visiting the website.

### 4. Remain calm

If you are angered by a message online or attacked by a cyberbully, stay calm. Before you respond to a message, give yourself some time to decompress. Regardless of the situation, you should wait at least 24 hours to respond. If you feel the same way, then you need to take appropriate action. Minors talk with your parents and come up with a plan to respond. In the case of adults, there are many ways to tackle the situation depending on the communication. In an office environment the best way to tackle the situation is to schedule time to meet the person face to face. If you are attacked online, you can choose to ignore the message or take it to the proper authorities.

### 5. Think family first

When you are online, before you make a decision you're unsure of, think about how it is going to impact your family. Would your family approve of it? How will this represent your family? If you send an obscene image from your phone to a friend, how do you really know something bad won't happen with it? How do you know your friend won't send your image to another friend? Remember what is posted on the Internet will be there forever. Note: These tips are not comprehensive and you should use them as a quick reference. S.M.A.R.T. is a shortcut when you are thinking about surfing safely on the web.

Visit: <http://leadinghands.org> for more information.

---

## + Be S.M.A.R.T. Online

What is S.M.A.R.T.?

Share information responsibly

Monitor your time and surfing habits

Avoid bad neighborhoods

Remain calm

Think family first

Visit <http://leadinghands.org>