



## Parry Aftab's Guide to Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

### MySpace, Facebook and Xanga, Oh! My!

Keeping yourself and your kids safe on social networks

#### The quick tips for teens:

- Put everything behind password protected walls, where only friends can see
- Protect your password and make sure you really know who someone is before you allow them onto your friends list
- Blur or morph your photos a bit so they won't be abused by cyberbullies or predators
- Don't post anything your parents, principal or a predator couldn't see
- What you post online stays online - forever!!!! So thinkb4uClick!
- Don't do or say anything online you wouldn't say offline
- Protect your privacy and your friends' privacy too...get their okay before posting something about them or their pic online
- Check what your friends are posting/saying about you. Even if you are careful, they may not be and may be putting you at risk.
- That cute 14-year old boy may not be cute, may not be 14 and may not be a boy! You never know!
- And, unless you're prepared to attach your MySpace to your college/job/internship/scholarship or sports team application...don't post it publicly!

#### And for parents:

- Talk to your kids – ask questions (and then confirm to make sure they are telling you the truth!)
- Ask to see their profile page (for the first time)...tomorrow! (It gives them a chance to remove everything that isn't appropriate or safe...and it becomes a way to teach them what not to post instead of being a gotcha moment! Think of it as the loud announcement before walking downstairs to a teen party you're hosting.)
- Don't panic...there are ways of keeping your kids safe online. It's easier than you think!
- Be involved and work with others in your community. (Think about joining [WiredSafety.org](http://WiredSafety.org) and help create a local cyber-neighborhood watch program in your community.)
- Remember what you did that your parents would have killed you had they known, when you were fifteen.
- This too will pass! Most kids really do use social networks just to communicate with their friends. Take a breath, gather your thoughts and get help when you need it. (You can reach out to [WiredSafety.org](http://WiredSafety.org).)
- It's not an invasion of their privacy if strangers can see it. There is a difference between reading their paper diary that is tucked away in their sock drawer...and reading their MySpace. One is between them and the paper it's written on; the other between them and 700 million people online!
- Don't believe everything you read online – especially if your teen posts it on her MySpace!
- And, finally....repeat after me – “I'm still the parent!” If they don't listen or follow your rules, unplug the computer...the walk to the library will do them good. ☺

For more information, visit [WiredSafety.org](http://WiredSafety.org).

# — Tips to Prevent Sexting —

- **THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES** of taking, sending, or forwarding a sexual picture of someone underage, even if it's of you. You could get kicked off of sports teams, face humiliation, lose educational opportunities, and even get in trouble with the law.
- **NEVER TAKE** images of yourself that you wouldn't want everyone—your classmates, your teachers, your family, or your employers—to see.
- **BEFORE HITTING SEND**, remember that you can't control where this image may travel. What you send to a boyfriend or girlfriend could easily end up with their friends, and their friends, and their friends...
- **IF YOU FORWARD** a sexual picture of someone underage, you are as responsible for this image as the original sender. You could face child pornography charges, go to jail, and have to register as a sex offender.
- **REPORT** any nude pictures you receive on your cell phone to an adult you trust. Do not delete the message. Instead, get your parents or guardians, teachers, and school counselors involved immediately.

