

Former Detective Offers Top Safety Tips For Parents Whose Children Use Social Networking Websites

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Atlanta, GA/July 3, 2008 – Award winning former law enforcement officer and former detective Stacy Dittrich, who specialized in sex crimes, has developed a list of top safety tips for parents whose children use social networking websites such as MySpace and FaceBook. The dangers from child predators are becoming more toxic. As the issue of child predators stalking children on social networking sites is becoming more prevalent, parents need to be more proactive in monitoring their children's online activities. Dittrich has developed eight easy tips for parents and warns that not just social networking sites, but all computer activity should be monitored.

“The internet has given child predators a new platform to harass children and lure them into danger,” said Dittrich. “It is critical that parents be more vigilant now then ever before as child predators have become more sophisticated and dangerous in approaching children.”

Dittrich's tips are:

1. Monitor all computer activity, not just social networks: Most internet providers are giving parents extensive avenues to monitor all activity by their children. Some, like AOL, will provide instant emails to parents with a list of web sites visited.

2. Ask yourself, “What is the benefit of my 12-year old having a MySpace page? The answer should be none. There is absolutely no productive or positive outcome for anyone under the age of 18 to engage in social networking. The negatives, however, are endless. They are subjected to harassment, sexual predators, and negative criticism for starters.

3. Pay attention to conversations taking place on the network.

If your child is engaged in conversation with a person who claims to be a fellow teenager (someone your child has never met), use common sense when reading their conversations. Do their language, slang, and grammar reflect what a typical teen would say and write? Do they write and speak “overly” proper, like an educated adult would? Most pedophiles are educated to an extent.

4. Learn your way around the social networking sites

You can't monitor your child's activities or cyber conversations if you don't even know how to turn on a computer. Take a quick class or have someone show you. Learn your way through the sites and you will be able to quickly access your child's activities.

5. Don't rely on local law enforcement when confronted with a predator.

Local law enforcement isn't equipped to track out of state offenders on social networks, and federal law enforcement is having a difficult time keeping up with them. Networks, like MySpace, are now providing complaint forms to perform their own investigations to track predators. Even if the suspected pedophile is local, law enforcement will still need a subpoena to even attempt to identify the suspect. It's a long process, and a lot of work. It's as frustrating to law enforcement as it is parents! The new video games that involve social networking are a breeding ground for sex offenders since they are almost impossible to track.

6. Be a parent, not a friend

The bottom line and solution to criminal activities within social networks is simple; shut your child's page down. Trying to be a cool parent may ultimately put your child in danger. If you insist your child should continue to be active on social networking sites, be diligent, watchful, and police your child's activity with the strictest means necessary. Limit the time on the site, and watch for warning signs that your child may be involved in something more serious than merely talking to

friends.

7. Keep the computer in a centralized area

If the computer is in the family room, your child is less likely to engage in unwanted activity

8. Cyber bullying is the biggest problem facing teens

More so than predators, cyber bullying has affected almost 43% of teens. This has resulted in suicides, violent behavior, problems at school, and in the home. If you know who the bully is, contact law enforcement immediately and file a complaint on the social network site.

Stacy Dittrich is an award winning 15-year law enforcement officer, author, and former detective specializing in sex crimes. With past training by former FBI Behavioral Specialist, and bestselling author, Roy Hazelwood, Stacy is certified through the National Institute of Truth Verification as an examiner (CVSA- lie detector). Stacy has also been assigned to a federal drug task force that resulted in arrests from California to Mexico and has been involved in the investigations of numerous homicides. In 2002, Stacy received the Victim's of Crime Award from former Ohio Attorney General, Jim Petro. A certified law enforcement instructor, Stacy is also a media consultant in the area of law enforcement. Her book that launches the CeeCee Gallagher detective series, *The Devil's Closet* is due for release in October 2008; the second in May 2009. Her first true crime, "Murder Behind the Badge: True Stories of Cops Who Kill" is slated for a September 2009 release. Stacy's memoir about life as a female police officer debuts in Spring 2010.

Additional information on Stacy Dittrich may be obtained at www.stacydittrich.com.

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