

# Predators Online

By David Keyes

Predators Online

David Keyes  
david@freeindeed.com

[http:// http://www.safetynetusa.com/resources/newsletter](http://www.safetynetusa.com/resources/newsletter)

## PREDATORS ONLINE

Most of us own and drive a car. While we know that the highway is filled with dangerous drivers, that fact doesn't usually cross our minds when we buckle up. Internet usage is increasing daily. As we become more comfortable using it, we may not be concerned enough with the powerful dangers it can present. Logging on to the Information Super Highway puts us on a broad road where the dangers are extreme, potentially harmful, and often subtle or unseen – especially for children.

Would you allow your children to spend one-on-one time with a known sex offender? Of course not! But letting them surf an unfiltered Internet could lead to that very scenario. Sexual predators usually operate alone. However, the communication power of the Internet has allowed them to seek out victims with anonymity, greatly increasing their ability to both strategize their approach and avoid detection.

Using instant messages, emails, and especially chat rooms, they pose as a minor and look for an unsuspecting child and develop a relationship with. The patient process often begins by showing attention and sympathy – particularly in those areas where the child has disagreements with a parent or other authority figure.

The online predator begins to build a profile of their potential victim: hobbies, personality/insecurities, schedule, home/school/work situations, home address, etc. The tone of communication becomes increasingly affectionate. Sexual themes are innocently introduced and escalate as allowed by the child. The ultimate goal is to build enough trust for the victim to be willing to meet in person.

How do we, as parents, protect our kids from experiencing a horror like this? By far, the most important thing we can do is communicate openly with our kids about the dangers of Internet usage (what to look for in emails, instant messages, and chat rooms that might be suspicious).

Young children should not have access to email, chat rooms or instant messaging. You may want to allow your teenagers to use these tools as long as you have the ability to closely monitor their activity. You must have full access to where they are going online and observe the type of chat room conversations they participate in. They should never reveal personal information to strangers (such as name, age, gender, school or address). Make sure they don't download anything without your permission. They also need to know that your rules apply when they use the Internet in other

locations (friends' homes, the library, school). Tell your kids to NEVER respond to strangers in emails or instant messages (and report to you if it happens).

The Information Super Highway is an exciting place to navigate, and now you can do so worry-free. Don't let the dangerous drivers out there prevent you from accessing the information and tools that are yours at the click of a mouse!

[Get-Articles.com : 1000's of reprintable business and internet marketing-related articles.](#)

[Submit your article for reprint.](#)