

NM Attorney General  
GARY K. KING

LMIRL

internet safety guide  
for teens

As a teenager you are at the last stage  
in your life when you will be happy to  
hear that the phone is for you.  
—Fran Lebowitz, American author

Dear Teen,

When I sat down to write this message I immediately got stuck...what could I say about Internet Safety that young people wouldn't think was just another "lesson in life" story from an adult? Not to mention a story from a guy who happens to be the Attorney General...what is that anyway? I'll keep it simple. A big part of my job is to help protect the people of New Mexico, especially young people who are often the victims of dangerous criminals. These criminals know that today's teens "live" on the Internet; to them it's like fishing in a pond that contains a world of potential victims.

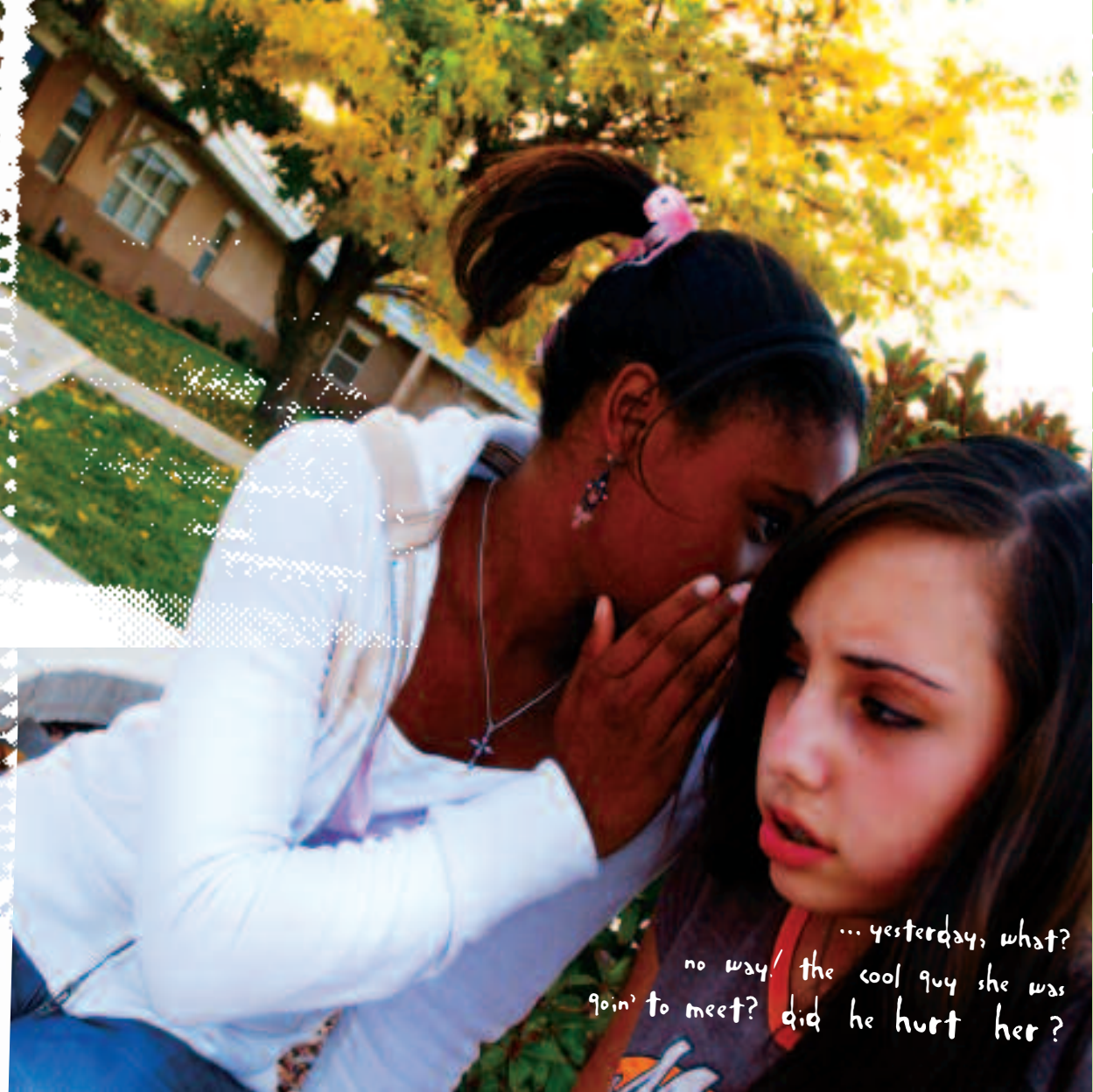
So that's what this booklet is all about...good information to help keep you and your friends safe while living your lives online. Read it and pass it on to someone you care about; it's a good thing.



Being a teenager can be tough enough sometimes. Please don't let an online stranger lead you down a path to someplace you never wanted to be. Enjoy the Internet. It offers virtually the whole world to explore. But please also be safe. Thank you.

**Gary K. King**  
New Mexico Attorney General





... yesterday, what?  
no way! the cool guy she was  
goin' to meet? did he hurt her?

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

The Internet can be a really great tool, fun to surf in your spare time, and totally entertaining. But remember, some things are just too good to be true.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where people sometimes take advantage of others, especially youth. It's good to be prepared; this may happen to a friend or a sibling. **Anything on the Internet, whether it's chat rooms or web sites, that attracts you and your friends will also attract predators.**

>>> Read on.

Many predators, people searching for young adults and teens to rape, kidnap or harm, now use the Internet as their tool of choice. Instead of doing research, like you are doing for that English paper, a predator uses the Internet to find victims. Predators communicate through chat rooms and instant messaging seeking to develop relationships with young people. They seek the trust of young people. When a trust forms, they ask to meet somewhere to check out a movie, window shop or get

something to eat. Typically, a predator does all this while posing as a young adult or teenager himself.

### Who are the cyber predators?

#### Not who you think:

- >> 99% are male
- >> Above average intelligence
- >> Above average incomes
- >> Have a successful career
- >> 91% non-Hispanic white
- >> Have computer knowledge
- >> Many have children of their own
- >> Have no criminal history related to sex crimes
- >> 86% are older than 25

### HOW THEY LURE YOUNG PEOPLE:

Predators use the anonymity of the Internet to talk to young adults. **They look for many clues to figure out what you like, who you are and sometimes, even where you live.** Too often, it's made easy because information has been volunteered by young people.

## 1/ USER NAMES / SCREEN NAMES:

While a user name or screen name seems like a pretty innocent thing, it can be a gold mine of information for a predator. When choosing a user name or screen name, many people choose something familiar and easy to remember. You might think about your favorite bands, pets, hobbies and sports as part of a user name or screen name. But by doing so, what information have you given a predator to use?

### User name:

Abercromshoper89.

This tells the predator that you like to shop, Abercrombie and Fitch is a favorite of yours, and that you were born in 1989.

### User name:

prisonerofhermione15.

This tells the predator that you are a Harry Potter fan, you especially like the character Hermione Granger, and you are likely 15.

Armed with this information, a predator will talk to Abercromshoper89 about shopping and fashion while talking to prisonerofhermione15 about Harry Potter and magic.

It may not seem important, but providing a predator with any information that helps him learn how to become a trusted friend is unnecessary and potentially dangerous.



WHEN CHOOSING A USER NAME OR SCREEN NAME, think of the game "MadLibs." Try using one of the following formulas to select a user name:

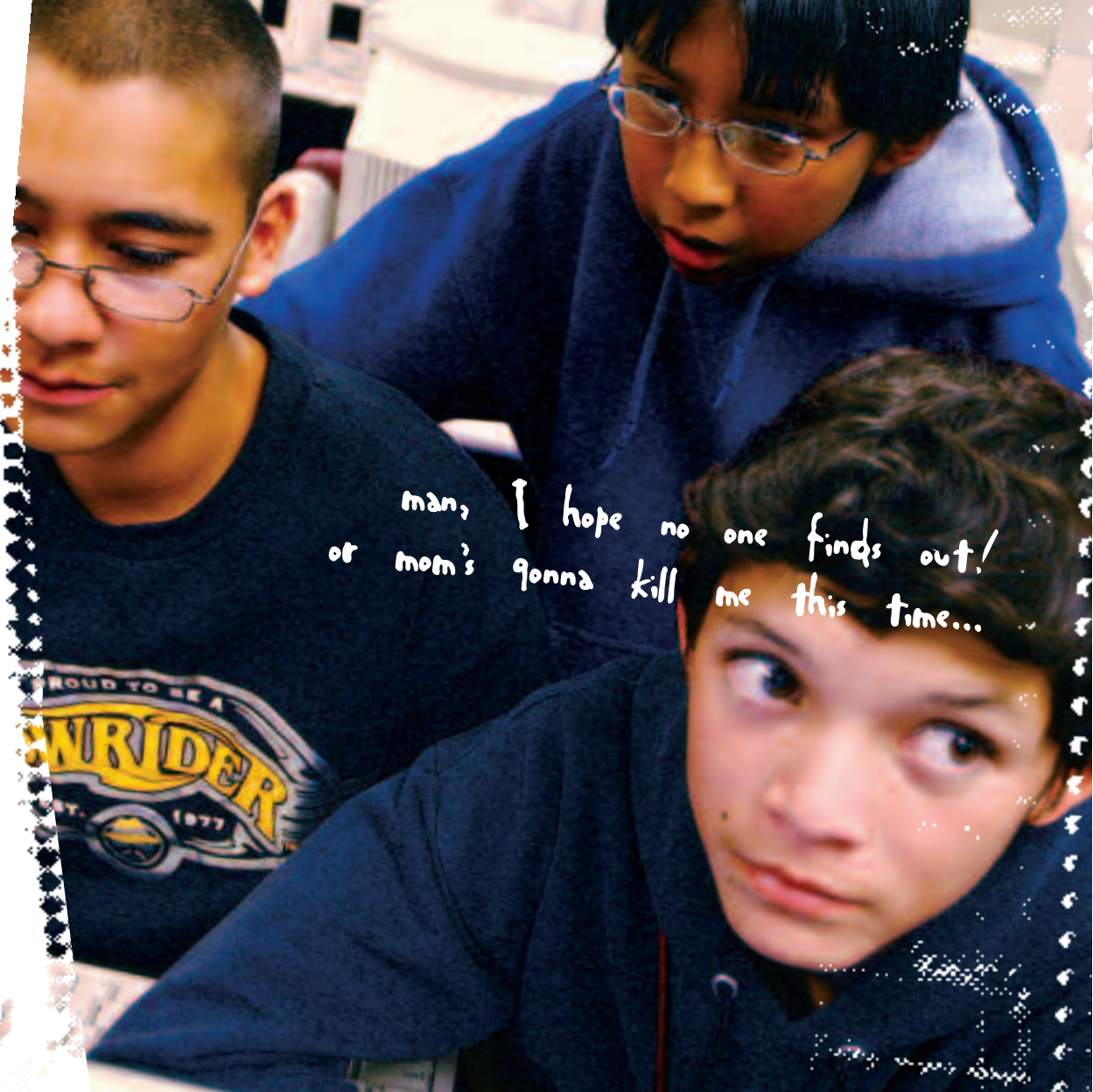
- >>> Adjective + noun  
stuffedninja
- >>> Size + animal  
minielephant
- >>> Season + noun  
summerteeth
- >>> RANDOM number + ice cream flavor  
45cookie dough
- >>> Actor's name + action verb  
Travoltadancing
- >>> Color + foreign food  
pucebaklava

NOT your age, phone number or address

A user name or screen name with a random selection of words such as "Soupshoe" is much better than a potentially descriptive identifier such as "Missy1981". Make sure your user identifier doesn't relate to you, your age, your school, your location, or your interests.

and have Fun with it!





man, I hope no one finds out!  
or mom's gonna kill me this time...

## 2/ PROFILES:

Profiles can provide predators with a lot of useful information. Profiles ask for information like your real name, birthday, address, phone number, hobbies and what school you go to. Filling out this information is meant to be useful to other teens and young adults who are looking for people to chat with who are interested in the same things.

The problem is that predators use personal information to gain your trust and find ways to manipulate you. Filling out profiles is not required to use most chat programs, and filling them out is a pain in the neck anyway. To protect yourself, fill out profiles only on sites that allow you to control who has access to the profile.

## 3/ WHAT YOU SAY:

Some predators will do something called "cyberstalking" (and yes, it's as scary as it sounds). A predator will go to a teen or young adult chat room and pick a user name to follow through chat rooms. The predator will slowly accumulate information about that user by simply reading what they are chatting about with other

chatters. Young adults and teens face many problems with peer pressure, parents, friends and other family members. Chat rooms seem like the perfect place to gripe about all those people who are disturbing your life, but watch out for people too anxious to relate. Often, predators will play on your emotions by saying they went through the same thing.

## 4/ SELLING STUFF:

By selling things online, you can always make a quick buck off of that old Pokemon or Ninja Turtles collection you got for your birthday when you were six. But selling things can also provide dangerous information to predators. Sometimes, a seller will provide their telephone number so that people interested in purchasing can call and ask questions about the item; predators don't always call. Instead they use your telephone number to track you down. Providing your phone number not only tells a predator what state you live in, it also can lead them to your house.

### **THEIR TECHNIQUES:**

Identifying a cyber predator is difficult because they sound like anyone else. Chatting online can be really fun and can be a quick way to make new friends, but it might not be the safest way. Predators have many techniques that they use to convince you that they are just like you, can relate to your problems, and would like to become your real friend instead of your online buddy.

### **Giving you special stuff:**

Sometimes there are things that you may or may not want to see, like Playboy pinups or other sexually explicit material. Sometimes curiosity gets the best of us, but safety is always the most important thing to remember. When an online buddy sends you sexually explicit material, whether you want it or

not, it is smart to stop speaking to that buddy. Predators use this technique to scare or befriend you. Almost all of the time this material is unwanted, but if you continue to speak to this person, they will push you to do more things than just look at inappropriate material. Ending the conversation with this person will tell that predator that you are not interested in what they have to offer as an online buddy any longer.

### **Pretending:**

As stated in the previous sections, predators will often disguise themselves as teenagers and young adults. Sometimes they will let you know that they are adults, but most often they will befriend you online as a peer. These people can be very convincing and, without realizing what you have done, you may befriend a predator. There really is no way to know who

is your same age and who is an adult, but being safe means ending communication with any online buddy if they begin to harass you. Remember, never give out too much personal information (not even an email address) and if anything mean or inappropriate happens, don't be afraid to tell your parents.

### **Threats:**

If an online buddy begins to threaten you because you refuse to meet him or speak to him anymore, the best thing to do is tell your parents. Predators exploit any weaknesses they can find. A predator's objective is to make you do what he wants whether or not you want to do it. Getting advice from your parents will help you make the right decision and will make sure you stay safe.



**WOW, that's pretty Yucky...  
SCROLL DOWN NOW**



...tony is cute i guess, but the guy ive met on the internet last week is sooo much cooler  
he is 18 he said and i think he likes me 2... and then he sent an email and said i look totally  
hot in that picture.. he said he wants to meet...

**User name tracking:**

Searching chat rooms or reading your blogs (online journals) are easy ways for a predator to learn how to talk to you and earn your trust. By following you through chat rooms, a predator can gather information about you and make you feel comfortable enough to talk to them about anything, even revealing secrets. Beware of someone who knows everything about conversations you have been having or are quick to say "the same thing happened to me."

**Photographs:**

Putting photographs online is becoming more and more popular, especially with chat rooms, blogs, and online social networks like "myspace.com." Unfortunately, there are a number of reasons why photographs are a problem:

- Combining a photograph with personal information can make it extremely easy for a predator to find his way to your school or doorstep.
- Photographs can be manipulated—your face put onto another person's body in a sexually explicit photograph—and posted for anyone, including your parents, to see.
- It is important to understand that a predator wants a picture of his prey. He will ask for a photo. He may ask for you to pose partially or completely undressed. If you send a predator a picture of yourself that you would not want your parents or friends to see, the predator can use that photograph to blackmail you into sending more. A predator is trying to control the person he is preying on. This is not a relationship about love; it is about control.


Pictures may be fun, but make sure that you post pictures only in places where people you know can view them. Be very careful when putting your photo online.

**Email:**


Sometimes you meet people who you really like online and you want to talk to them more than just in chat rooms. Giving out your email address or instant messaging screen name can be a good way to keep your conversation private. But be careful when you give out your email address. Often times your email has a profile that can be easily accessed by a predator. Emails are personal and are sometimes unsafe to give to online buddies. Limit the people who have your email address to friends and family, try not to give it to people you meet in chat rooms and set your chat profile to not display your email address.



## THE GROOMING PROCESS.



Predators groom their victims. The objective of grooming is to manipulate the victim into behaving in whatever manner the predator wants.

- 1 CHARLIE STARTS CHAT, EXPRESSES FEELINGS THAT THE PREDATOR CAN EASILY PICK UP ON.
  - 2 PREDATOR BEGINS 'GROOMING' BY EXPRESSING EMPATHY TO GAIN THE KID'S TRUST.
  - 3 CHARLIE FURTHER EXPRESSES TRUST IN THE PERSON HE/SHE IS CHATTING WITH, ENCOURAGING THE PREDATOR.
  - 4 FURTHER EXPRESSION OF EMPATHY FROM PREDATOR.
  - 5 CHARLIE'S FRUSTRATION IS EVIDENT TO THE PREDATOR WHO TAKES FULL ADVANTAGE OF CHARLIE BY PORTRAYING HIMSELF AS A TRUSTED CONFIDANT.
  - 6 PREDATOR OFFERS A WAY TO ENTICE CHARLIE
- 

1 Charlie89: my mom sux!  
its her falt that my  
parents are gettin divorced

2 PREDATOR: i no.  
my parents r2.

3 C: evry time i need  
somethin she says the same  
thing "we cant aford it"

C: when my parents were  
2gether i could buy stuff  
C: now i cant

4 P: me to. i hate dat.  
C: i w8ed 6 mos for this  
game to come out  
C: my mom promisd me  
wed get it.

C: can i get it now? nope.  
C: we dont have enuf \$\$\$.  
my mom sux!

5 P: wow. thats tuf  
P: i hav a realy cool uncle  
P: buys me things all  
the time  
P: he has lots o \$\$\$

C: ur sooooo lucky!  
6 P: i got an idea. ill  
see if hell by it 4 u.

C: really? thx man!

7 P: brb gonna call him

8 P: w00t! he said k

C: wow realy? thx i  
cant bleve it.

9 P: where do u live?

C: abq,nm u?

10 P: denver,co uncle 2. ne  
malls near u?

11 C: cottonwood mall.

P: ive herd of that one.  
Saturday ok?

C: sounds good.

12 P: b ther at 12

C: k. meet at the  
game store.

P: k!


C: well g2g.  
thx again dude

C: this is awesome!

C: TTYL!

P: l8r



7  OF COURSE, THERE IS NO  
'RIGHT UNCLE.' THE PREDATOR GIVES THAT  
IMPRESSION TO CHARLIE BY WAITING  
FOR A PERIOD OF TIME BEFORE  
SENDING HIS NEXT MESSAGE.


8 PREDATOR EXPRESSES EXCITEMENT,  
TELLS CHARLIE THE 'UNCLE' WILL BUY  
THE GAME.

9 PREDATOR STARTS ASKING FOR CLUES  
ABOUT CHARLIE, BEGINS THE PROCESS  
OF SCHEMING TO FIND OUT WHERE  
CHARLIE IS TO ARRANGE  
A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING.

10 THE PREDATOR WILL PLACE HIMSELF  
IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO CHARLIE,  
REGARDLESS OF HIS ACTUAL LOCATION.


11 CHARLIE HAS ACTUALLY JUST DETERMINED  
THE FINAL MEETING PLACE WITHOUT  
REALIZING THE DANGER HE/SHE IS IN,  
EVEN THOUGH TRUST HAS BEEN  
BUILT UP WITH THE NEW 'FRIEND.'

12 PREDATOR FINAUIZES THE MEETING.



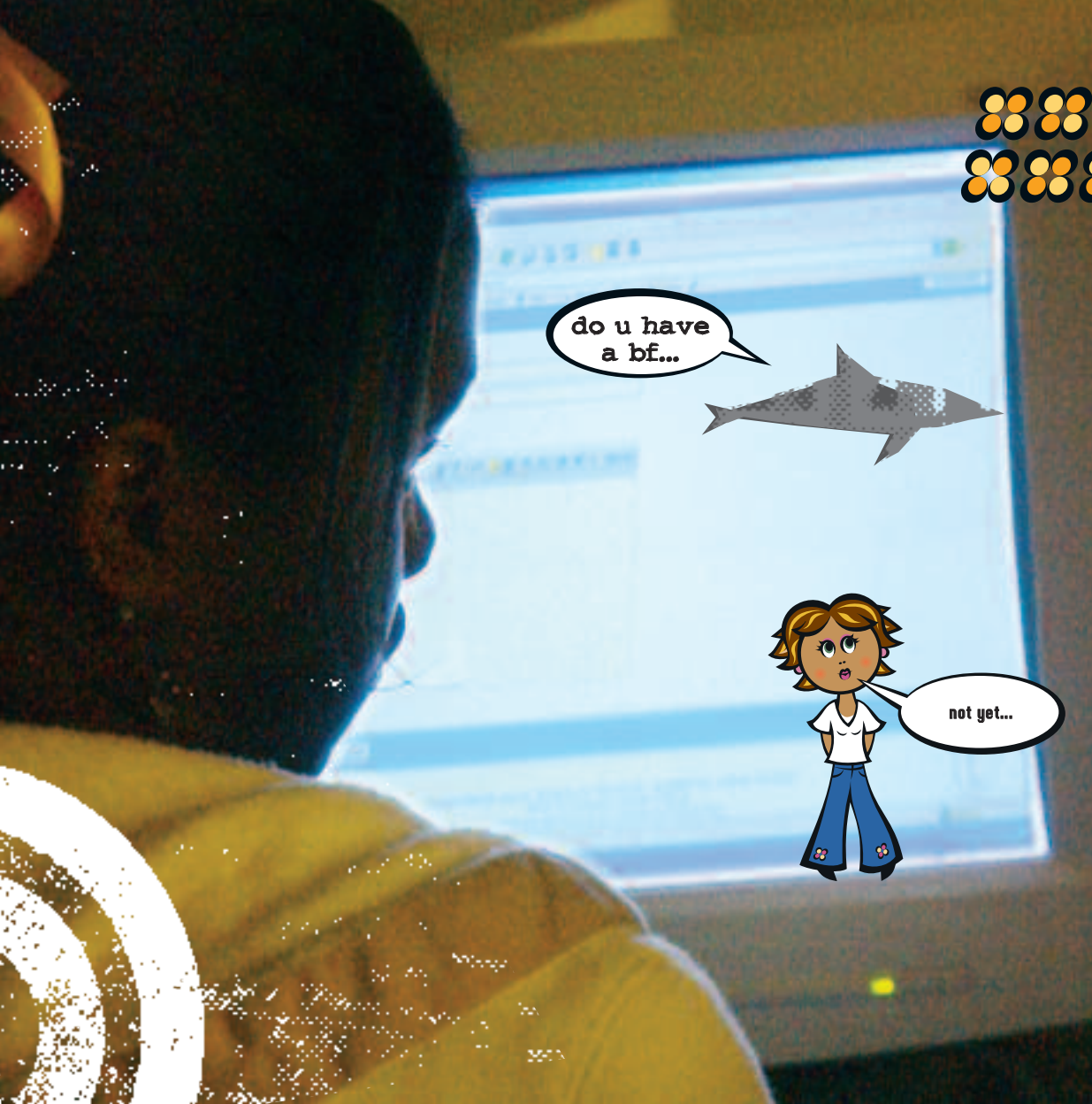
THE PREDATOR  
NOW HAS ALL  
THE INFORMATION  
HE NEEDS  
TO MEET YOU  
FACE-TO-FACE.

Here's an example of an  
online chat you could  
experience and  
how you might  
find yourself  
being "groomed" by  
a cyber predator:

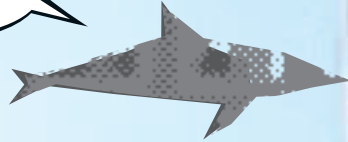





# IN WHICH OF THESE TWO sessions is **Soccrgrl29** chatting with a **potential predator**?



do u have a bf...



not yet...

Bob174: Hi 

Soccrgrl29: Hi

Bob174: ASL?

Soccrgrl29: 13/f/usa.u?

Bob174: 14/m/usa

Soccrgrl29: mm.. guess not

Bob174: y r u not at school?

Soccrgrl29: day off. yay :)

Bob174: kewl. so ur home alone?

Soccrgrl29: ya.parents r at work

Bob174: do u have a bf?

Soccrgrl29: no

Bob174: do u want 1?

Soccrgrl29: yes... :)

LikeMikey22: Hi 

Soccrgrl29: Hi

LikeMikey22: asl?

Soccrgrl29: 13/f/usa.u?

LikeMikey22: 14/m/usa. u like soccer?

Soccrgrl29: yea, it's my fave sport. i'm a forward

LikeMikey22: cool. me to :)what else do u like to do

Soccrgrl29: hang out with my friends, go shopping at the mall, go to the movies. u?

LikeMikey22: skateboard, hang out, play hackysack, watch tv

Soccrgrl29: cool. skateboarding looks like fun but i bet i would fall

LikeMikey22: it's not that hard

Soccrgrl29: maybe i'll try it someday :)

The answer: Both Bob174 and LikeMikey22 could be potential predators. But the most recognizable predator is Bob174. He asks highly personal questions and wants to know if Soccrgrl29 is alone.

1 in 7 young people  
has received unwanted  
sexual solicitations online

1 in 4 young people  
has been exposed to  
sexually explicit  
pictures online without seeking  
or expecting them

1 in 17 young people has  
been threatened  
or harassed online

1 in 33 young people has  
received an aggressive  
solicitation  
to meet  
somewhere



yeah man, he said  
he will get me to the  
concert tomorrow FOR FREE!

he knows the drummer  
real well!  
cool ha? yeah, he's cool...



EXIT

WELL YEAH, BUT HE IS  
SO NOT THE GUY  
I THOUGHT ... AND HE  
IS LIKE STALKING ME NOW!  
... DON'T KNOW  
HE IS SCARING ME  
NOPE, BUT DON'T  
TELL ANYONE



## ONLINE ACTIVITIES

### & their POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES:



#### 1. Chatting with strangers in a chat room

It's easy to lie online because a person's identity can be easily disguised, so you never know who you are talking to. Giving out information to people online is just as dangerous as giving the same information to a stranger you meet on the street, maybe even more dangerous.

#### 2. Using a webcam

For a predator, a webcam is the next best thing to an in-person meeting. By allowing people to view your webcam, you are essentially opening the shades to your home or your bedroom and allowing a complete stranger to watch you through that window. Predators will use what they see to take advantage of you. They may record the video you send and post it for the world to see or simply wait and use it against you later.

#### 3. Accepting webcam views from strangers

By accepting an invitation to view live webcams from strangers, you could be exposed to unwanted nudity and sexually explicit video which could be disturbing. Remember, that 16 year old that is inviting you to see him is more likely to be around 50, overweight and hairy.

#### 4. Arranging a face-to-face meeting with someone you've met online

Since it is not possible to know who you are really talking to online, you may be unpleasantly surprised when you discover that person's true identity. Predators arrange meetings with youth for the purposes of hurting, molesting, raping, kidnapping, and even killing.

#### 5. Downloading pictures from an unknown source

Downloading a picture may bring hidden viruses, which may destroy your computer, or place "cookies" that allow the sender to track where you go on the Internet, as well as key stroke trackers that may be used to steal your identity.

#### 6. Filling out online profiles

Filling out profiles will allow predators to see personal information about you, such as your real name, phone number, address, school name, etc., and will allow the predator to "find" you in real life.

#### 7. Posting pictures of yourself on the Internet

In addition to allowing anyone to get a look at you, digital photo manipulation can put your face on another body, in any graphic situation. When such a photo is in the possession of a predator, it can have devastating consequences. The predator might threaten to send the picture to your parents or spread it all over the Internet unless you do as he says.

#### 8. Posting on blogs and social networking sites

Because these popular online features are virtual diaries, they give online predators a more intimate look into your thoughts and feelings. By reading postings on a blog, a predator can get a greater insight into your vulnerabilities, likes and dislikes and can "tailor" his message to you. It may take a predator some time to learn about you, but the more information you place on blogs, podcasts and social networking sites, the easier you will make it for the predator. The next time you think you have met your online soulmate, consider that it is more likely that you have encountered a cyber predator.

#### 9. Responding to postings that are belligerent or harassing

These messages are often posted by the author simply to get a reaction. If you do respond, you may open yourself to harassment.



he sent me ugly pictures again -  
I don't like him any more...  
he said he's gonna tell my mom  
what we chat about  
if I don't call him back though

## CYBER SAFETY GUIDELINES:

- Anyone can lie on the Internet.
- Limit giving out information about yourself to trusted friends or family.
- Help catch predators. Report any of the following to ICAC investigators at (505) 222-9000 or [www.NMCyberSafety.org](http://www.NMCyberSafety.org):
  - >>> Child pornography - do not print it or send it, but save it.
  - >>> Sexually explicit pictures or streaming video - save the information.
  - >>> Sexual solicitation - save the communication by copying and pasting into a text file.
- Don't stay in an uncomfortable or dangerous situation online. You might hesitate to tell your parents because they may not approve of how you got into the situation. But you should realize that a bad situation could get worse if you ignore it. Talk to a parent or a trusted adult.
- Share these guidelines with your friends and siblings.

Wherever you see  
this icon



it means that  
you can find more  
information about  
that topic on  
the Attorney  
General's  
website at  
[www.ago.state.nm.us](http://www.ago.state.nm.us).

What? really?  
he said he's gonna copy the latest CD for you?  
oh sweet, man. you are meeting him at the park?  
Yo. Later.

Based on following these chats which of these two people should dirt\_rider\_15 be **SUSPICIOUS** of?

**a**

mx\_racer45: hey dirt rider  
dirt\_rider\_15: hey  
mx\_racer45: ASL  
dirt\_rider\_15: 15/m/nm  
dirt\_rider\_15: u  
mx\_racer45: 17/m/tx  
mx\_racer45: darn hoping u would be girl  
mx\_racer45: but no problem; u ride moto thou?  
dirt\_rider\_15: yeah 4 fun  
mx\_racer45: awesome me 2  
mx\_racer45: what u ride?  
dirt\_rider\_15: kx250  
dirt\_rider\_15: u?  
mx\_racer45: yz400  
mx\_racer45: u have pic of it?  
dirt\_rider\_15: yeah, I send it.  
dirt\_rider\_15: u have 1?  
mx\_racer45: great look n bike  
dirt\_rider\_15: yours 2  
mx\_racer45: I liv in el paso, where in nm u liv?  
dirt\_rider\_15: Belen  
mx\_racer45: where that?  
dirt\_rider\_15: between Albuquerque and Las Cruces  
mx\_racer45: cool  
mx\_racer45: maybe we can rid some time  
dirt\_rider\_15: cool

**b**

moto-boy77: Hey dirt rider  
dirt\_rider\_15: Hey  
moto-boy77: ASL  
dirt\_rider\_15: 15/m  
dirt\_rider\_15: u  
moto-boy77: 17/m,  
moto-boy77: 2 old for u?  
dirt\_rider\_15: no  
moto-boy77: I c u ride motocross  
dirt\_rider\_15: just 4 fun  
moto-boy77: cool  
moto-boy77: I also ride 4 fun,  
moto-boy77: I used to compete  
dirt\_rider\_15: y u stop?  
moto-boy77: 2 busy  
moto-boy77: where do you live, maybe we can go ride sometime?  
dirt\_rider\_15: I am not supposed to say  
moto-boy77: Ok but I thought it might be fun if showed you some cool tricks  
dirt\_rider\_15: I guess it would be ok  
dirt\_rider\_15: Belen NM  
moto-boy77: Is that near Albuquerque?  
dirt\_rider\_15: yeah howd u know?  
moto-boy77: I have friend in Albuquerque that I am going to visit in a few weeks  
moto-boy77: do you want to go ridding then?  
dirt\_rider\_15: that would be cool  
moto-boy77: u have pic?  
dirt\_rider\_15: yeah why?  
moto-boy77: I like 2 no who I'm talking 2  
dirt\_rider\_15: o, I'll send it  
dirt\_rider\_15: u have 1?

