



Online Sexual Predators II: The Real Risks

If you and your parents believed everything that they heard on TV about internet sexual predators, you wouldn't even have a computer anymore! There has been so much fear and hype connected to sexual predators that most people don't really know how big (or small) a problem it is and what we have to do to stop it.

Here are a few of the reasons why people worry so much about internet predators...

- You might have heard that “1 in 5 young people has received an unwanted sexual solicitation online.” But the truth is that only 3% of those teens who've reported a sexual solicitation were actually asked to meet someone offline, call them on the phone, or accept gifts. Most kids just ignored those unwanted emails or shrugged them off as unimportant or just annoying.
- If you ask parents about the biggest risk online, most will say “Internet sexual predators.” This ties into what parents have been worried about for decades -- “stranger danger,” or a fear of abductions. However the number of cases where a stranger has abducted a child is often far lower than most people realize. It is usually under 400 cases a year.
- Everyone thinks old men are the only ones trying to seduce you online. But most sexual solicitations come from someone your own age, or someone you know, not from someone looking to molest you.
- Reporting sexual predators is big business for the media, and for companies selling products designed to protect children from sexual predators online. So we may hear about this far more than we need to.
- The Internet and new technologies are foreign to most parents. People fear what they don't understand.

What does all this mean? It certainly doesn't mean that we don't need to watch out for Internet sexual predators. Because they are out there. And they are hurting and even killing kids they meet. So how do we balance the hype with the seriousness of the issue? Keep on reading and find out!