

5 TIPS TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SAFE THIS SUMMER

With school out for summer, kids of all ages will have more free time on their hands, and will inevitably be logging more hours online. While young web surfers may have grown up in an online world, they are also one of the most targeted groups by identity thieves and cyber criminals — among the least protected against intruders, and often lacking basic online privacy and safety knowledge.

How can you make sure that your kids have fun and stay safe when they go online? Keep reading for a look at Lavasoft's top 5 essential tips to help keep your family secure as they spend time on the Web this summer.

1. **Set limits to establish good Internet behavior and habits.** Establish clear family rules, make sure everyone understands them, and post them by the PC so they are quickly on hand. Essential areas to cover include:
 - The maximum amount of time spent online per day.
 - Whether or not social networking sites can be used, and how to use them.
 - Who can or cannot be communicated with online.
 - What sites and content are appropriate or inappropriate to browse or play on.
 - The ability to download and install programs or files. (It's a good rule of thumb to always have kids check with an adult before they install anything on the family PC.)
2. **Understand what information is confidential.** Have a clear understanding of what information is okay to give out, and what is not — and explain it to your kids.

It's especially important to emphasize the necessity of keeping the following details private:

- Passwords (don't even share them with friends)
 - Banking, credit card, or payment details
 - Personal facts that should not be shared with strangers
3. **Create awareness about real-world threats that cross over into their online world, like online predators and cyber bullying.** The Internet is an effortless way for kids to meet old friends and make new ones, just as it is for adults. But, online intruders are known to take advantage of the Web's openness and anonymity to prey on young people. At the same time, statistics show that children may be more likely to experience online harassment from their peers, known as cyber bullying, than to be targeted by a stranger. Go over what these threats are, and what to do if kids encounter a potentially threatening situation.
 4. **Be prepared for stealthy security threats.** Make certain that you have security measures in place on your computer before disaster strikes. Don't assume that child-friendly sites are free from aggressive ads and malicious content. These sites may have advertisements popping-up regularly or attempt to download programs without your child asking for them. Even mainstream sites are subject to stealthy attack techniques like SQL injections and drive-by-downloads.

At a minimum, you should:

- Install security software (anti-spyware, anti-virus, and a firewall) and keep it up-to-date. Make sure family member are aware of what security software you have, and warn them to be aware of messages and prompts from rogue security software and scareware, designed to trick them into purchasing fake products or giving away personal information.
 - Patch your operating system and other applications as soon as updates become available.
 - In Windows, operate under a limited user account, not the all-powerful administrator account.
5. **Plug-in to your kids' online lives — and let them know you're watching.** According to the Norton Online Family report, a study released in mid June 2010 that surveyed kids and adults in 14 countries around the world about their online experiences, 20 percent of kids say that their parents have “no idea” of what they do online. It's important to provide your kids with the online supervision they need to make good choices and stay secure. Need help on how to do that? The StaySafeOnline.org website is an excellent resource to learn more on how to guide your children as they use the Internet.