

Is the Chat Room Your Child is Using Safe?

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By Rosalyn Bronstein

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Have you ever stopped to think about how safe the chat room your child is using is? If it happens to be AOL, MSN, or something similar, your child is in an open environment where anyone can enter and pretend to be anyone they choose.

An NBC television `Dateline' hidden camera investigation on 24 September 2004, revealed that predators were actively engaged in luring teenagers into meetings for the purpose of having sex. Many were specifically looking for children who were underage.

With help from "Perverted Justice", an online vigilante group, volunteers posing as underage children went into chat rooms and before very long, were engaged in conversation with these men, who were eager to gather personal information - including addresses. Some suggested visiting inappropriate web sites. One man, a firefighter, used a webcam to video while sexually stimulating himself - then verified that the "child" could see what he was doing.

During the two days `Dateline' undertook their investigation, a steady stream of male visitors went to the address given by the "child", in the hopes of having sex with her. Instead, they found themselves face to face with a television reporter and camera crew.

Since chat rooms are a way of life for many, it's important for them to find ways of eliminating the risks while still being able to use these useful tools. Simply trying to filter out undesirables isn't enough - some will invariably get through. And these may be the most dangerous --- and clever - because they know how to avoid detection.

As responsible adults and concerned parents, we decided to address the problems of user safety and security when communicating on the Internet and built a web site that provides a safe and secure environment for ourselves and our children.

That web site is www.Ntouch4Families.com.

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The web site puts you in charge of your online environment where only those who are members of your family or circle of friends can interact with you and your children.

Since you control who is in your 'family hub', you can be sure that there will be no inappropriate advertising or viruses sent to either you or your children, or that people who are not known to you are talking to your children when they are online at www.Ntouch4Families.com.

With the increased mobility of 21st Century living, more and more people are locating in communities distant from relatives, due to job requirements or retirement. This is an ideal form of communication. It's also perfect for children away at college. Grandparents have found using this innovative site, with its wide array of features, a wonderful way to bond with grandchildren and keep abreast of domestic

activities, as well as a means of leaving a legacy — in text and pictures — they will treasure for generations.

Rosalyn Bronstein, for more than 20 years an author and consultant, has been an advisor to numerous multinational corporations and international organizations. She can be contacted at families@ntouch4.info

Can We Talk?

By Jane Fulton

What is a chat room?

It's an area of a website set aside for people to chat in 'real' time. In other words, messages appear on a screen as soon as they are typed, and are responded to immediately.

Let's go to an established chat room for our first visit — Yahoo Chat. Go to

After

the home page loads, click on the 'chat' link, at the left side of the page right by Connect.

You will first have to register, if you don't have a yahoo email address. If you already have a yahoo email address, then you can go straight to the chat room.

Under the 'Enter Chat Room' link, there are two 'Featured Rooms', you can choose instead. After you have made your choice, enter.

You will then be asked to enter your Yahoo ID and Password. The chat room will then begin to load.

Note: You can also download Yahoo Messenger. It's a Free messaging service that allows you to communicate with friends and family and others. It's useful by letting you know when certain people

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come online. You will download the messenger to your computer.

The messages will have the senders name in front of them, so that you will know who they come from. You type your message in a box at the bottom of the screen, then hit send.

It's fun to chat but beware, Chat Rooms Can Be Addictive!!

If you find that you truly enjoy the chat rooms, limit yourself to one or two hours per day at them.

Jane Fulton is Owner & Webmistress of:

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Can We Talk?

Self Defense Protection – Keeping Kids Safe Online

Monitoring Your Child's Computer For Their Safety

10 Profitable Reasons To Add A Discussion Board Or Chat Room To Your Web Site

Pregnancy Chat Rooms - Where Experience Meets Apprentice

Instant Site Safe And Folder Safe

Baby's First Year –What Parent Needs To Know

Help Your Child Succeed In School

Online Dating Secrets Revealed!

HIV/Aids Healed by the Power of God

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