

NetSafe Utah Cybersafe Your Teens

By some reports, one in seven children has been solicited for sex on the Internet. Particular targets are young girls age 12-19, but in many cases boys and younger children are solicited and victimized.

Utah ranks number one in the nation for home computer use, with computers in more than 74 percent of households. Utah ranks 5th highest in the nation for Internet use in the home and has the highest population of children in the nation. These statistics point to the need for Utah parents to make sure their children are safely using the Internet.

Cybersafe Your Teens, a one-hour discussion forum hosted by Doug Fabrizio and airing February 26 at 9 p.m. on KUED-Channel 7, explores practical ways parents can keep their children safe on the Internet. The program will be repeated March 1 at 8 p.m. and again March 3 at 7 p.m. on UEN-TV Channel 9.

The televised town hall meeting, produced by KUED's Elizabeth Southwell, is part of NetSafe Utah, a year-long project led by KUED, the Utah Education Network and the University of Utah College of Education. The project also involves the Utah State Office of Education, the Utah Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against children Task Force, and NetSmartz Workshop, an organization that provides interactive online activities to promote Internet safety for children and teenagers.

The KUED production will feature a panel of guests including: Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, who will look at several aspects of the problem such as the strategy of predators, what parents should look for and how law enforcement is fighting back; Pete Ashdown, President of XMission, who will outline options such as filtering software and what the industry is doing to prevent abuses on the internet; and Amber Lindsay of NetSmartz Workshop.

Other panelists include Anne Collier, editor and president of Net Family News and co-author of "My Space Unraveled" a parent's guide to teen social networking; Jerry Buie MSW, LCSW, from Pride Counseling; and Jason Burrow-Sanchez from the University of Utah Educational Psychology Department.

The program also features a parent-to-parent discussion, with a panel of parents including Adriel Burkholder, John Krutsh and Leslie Dalton who will discuss what they're doing to keep their kids safe online. A live studio audience will pose questions.

The hour-long program also includes pre-produced segments featuring officers with the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children task force discussing what they're doing to catch and prosecute predators, which teens are at risk, and what predatory conduct parent should be aware of. Also included will be a five-minute reading from the upcoming Salt Lake Acting Company production, "Sexsting," to foster discussion about family communication. Another segment features students talking about how they use the Internet, how they do or don't protect themselves, how predators may not be so easy to identify, and how they communicate with their parents about Internet use.

Parents will be able to request information packets during the broadcast. Additional resources are included online at www.netsafeutah.org, a special project web site that includes more information on how to stay safe on line , where to get help, and recommendations for great sites for kids. DVDs of the program along with printed materials will be distributed to schools.

The NetSafe Utah project is funded in part by the Utah State Legislature through a grant from the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice in partnership with the Utah Education Network, KUED, the University of Utah College of Education, Utah State Board of Education, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the Utah Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.