

Computer Safety

“Beware Of The Eye Of The Spy, He’s Gathering Information about you”

ONLINE COMMUNITIES



ONLINE COMMUNITY

- What is an Online Community?
- A **virtual community**, **e-community** or **online community** is a group of people that primarily interact via communication media such as letters, telephone, email or Usenet rather than face to face. If the mechanism is a computer network, it is called an *online community*.

Online Communities

Example of Online Communities:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com
- Myspace – www.myspace.com
- Cyworld – us.cyworld.com
- Orkut – www.orkut.com
- Xanga – www.xanga.com
- LJ (Live Journal) – www.livejournal.com
- PICZO – www.piczo.com
- E-Harmony – www.eharmony.com
- Faceparty – www.faceparty.com
- Yahoo Windows Live – get.live.com
- “Chat Rooms”

Online Communities

Concerns

- Feb. 3, 2006: Connecticut police say they are investigating whether as many as seven teenage girls have been sexually assaulted by men they met on the popular networking site MySpace.com. NBC's Pete Williams reports
- The Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported more than 2,600 incidents in 2006 of adults using the Internet to entice children

Online Communities

Concerns

- Wednesday, July 26, 2007 (Fox News) - RALEIGH, N.C. — MySpace.com has found more than 29,000 registered sex offenders with profiles on the popular social networking Web site — more than four times the number cited by the company two months ago, officials in two states Tuesday.

Online Communities

TimesOnline reports on September 17, 2007 -

Online criminals target Facebook and Virtual Worlds

- **Social networking sites and other online communities are being mined for personal information, a report warns**
- **Organized criminals are increasingly targeting online communities such as social networking sites and multi-player computer games, a security report has warned.**
- **The vast amount of personal information stored on sites such as Facebook has made them a rich source for fraudsters, who use the details to create highly specific threats, according to Symantec, the security firm.**

Online Communities

TimesOnline reports on September 17, 2007

- The 217 million people who play 'massively multi-player online games', or MMOGs, were also at risk from programs which purported to give them an advantage within the game but in fact installed 'keyloggers' - software which records every stroke of a keyboard, and other malicious code, on their machines.

Online Communities

Why People Migrate Towards Online Communities

- When people join an online community such as myspace.com they create and post personal profiles that can include their photos, age, city, school, song clips or favorite books and movies. Then they invite their offline friends — or even people they don't know — to join their contact list or so-called *friends* list. Photos of these "friends" then appear on your profile page, too.

People also interact within popular online communities by swapping messages with friends, posting diary-like blogs or creative writing, and sharing photos. Beyond their profiles, they can search through message boards and blogs about various topics like sports, relationships or music. Many teens are now even using online communities to organize around social or political issues. Some just like to show off their web design skills by customizing their profiles.

Online Communities

Safety Tips

- Research the Community – How do people interact? How is the content of posting?
- Personal Information – Do not provide personal demographics (Date of Birth, Home Address, School, Phone Number, SSN#, Job Information, etc...)
- Set and Enable “Private Setting/Blocks” – Limit and Control Access

Online Communities

Safety Tips

- Do not (or use extreme caution) meet “friends” offline
- Remember: Profiles are Public
 - * Victim of Harassment
 - * Criminals view profiles
 - * Schools view profiles
 - * Present and Futures Employer view profiles
 - * Law Enforcement view profiles



ANY QUESTIONS?