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It's in the Eye of the Beholder...Cyber Bullying and Other Posts That Hurt



"That's not what I meant!" For most of us, there have been times where we've sent an email or made a posting that didn't quite get the response we expected. In many cases, we keyboarded our thoughts without looking at the message through the eyes of the recipient. Since you can't see the recipient's physical reaction to your comments (and adjust your comments accordingly) the message you send, albeit well intended, can create a misunderstanding.

Fortunately, most emails and postings that are taken out of context can be easily explained and rectified. However, there are some messages that are sent or posted that were done purposely to offend, intimidate or threaten another. These are the greatest worry and can have severe consequences and personally impact the recipients. From breaking up friendships to encouraging a person to take their own life, messages can have devastating effects.

In the past, some kids who felt the need to bully were kept in check or discouraged from doing so because of fear of facing the person they wanted to intimidate. When they did treat a classmate poorly or intimidated them at school, they were many times caught by the teacher either through observation of their actions or a child reporting the act. This immediate report and response is certainly a deterrent on the school grounds. However, the cyber world has opened an entirely new and seemingly "easy to get away with" opportunity for bullies.

Some young people may become overly energetic in sharing their opinions about others while online because there isn't that feeling of consequences that comes with talking to a person face-to-face. They may also feel protected because of the anonymity of certain aspects of online activity and feel that no one will know who authored the threatening comments.

Content and tone in an email is important and sometimes young people don't realize how using certain words can make something sound a lot worse than it appears on the computer screen. While it's impossible to always know how others will interpret what has been said in an email, a good safety measure is to read it out loud before sending and then ask the question "if someone said that to my face, how would I take it?"

Email is certainly not the only route for bullies to make their opinions known or to intimidate another student. Blogs, social networking and even personal websites can become havens for inappropriate comments. As a parent or guardian, it's our responsibility to do all that we can to observe and review what our children are doing online. It's also our responsibility to talk with them about the consequences of cyber bullying and how it affects the victims and can have long term, even legal ramifications against the perpetrator.

Take a few moments to remind your children that *online* is not a place to solve disagreements and if someone is threatening or mistreating them, they need to report it to a trusted adult. Likewise, using threatening language over the internet can be very painful to the recipient and may even be illegal.

If your child has received emails or postings that threaten them or others it's important to notify law enforcement as well as their school. The school and law enforcement can decide the best course of action in dealing with the cyber bully.

There is a national effort to reduce and eliminate cyber bullying. Visit the National Crime Prevention's Council's page for ways to take action against this form of harassment and intimidation -- <http://www.ncpc.org/cyberbullying>

Parent Tip – Place the family computer in a location in the house where it is very visible and use software to monitor emails and web activity of your child. A child with a computer in a closed and private room can invite inappropriate use.

HOME SECURITY 101 **Shred It!**

Your garbage can tell a lot about you, such as what you eat, your recycling habits, what brands of detergent you prefer, your favorite dog food and unfortunately your most *personal* information.

The garbage and recycling containers aren't the place for your old intact documents, statements, tax forms and anything else that has your personal information. The reason is simple; there are thieves who look through garbage and recycling bins to find just that type of information. They use this information to, in essence, become you by accessing and acquiring credit in **your** name.



How do we stop them? **Shredding it!** No documents, envelopes, forms, receipts, statements or other items containing your personal information should find their way into your garbage can until they are in a condition that they can't be read or taped back together.

Shred it all! A cross-cut security shredder is your best bet as it does more than just cut long strips that can possibly be taped together. Rather, it makes cuts in at least two different directions making it nearly impossible to "recreate" the documents.

Turn on those shredders and get rid of those old files the safe way!

Camping Safety



The mosquito spray, the aloe for the sunburn, the matches for the campfire and the most important item... the marshmallows! ...But, is that ALL the essentials?

Camping is fun and spending time in nature is a great way to *get away from it all*, however, a fun trip can turn gloomy if safety isn't in your planning. The safety of you and your family or camping partners must be taken into consideration before you step out the front door or before you pack the sleeping bags.

Before you leave think about what you will need (and not need) to take. Jewelry, excessive cash, expensive electronics are all things that could put a real damper on the trip if left in your tent for someone to find. Instead, keep them at home and save them for a trip when you aren't protected by just a zipper and some mosquito netting. Those items that you must take, be sure to not leave in your tent when you venture from the campground for the day.

If leaving your car for the day while out hiking, be sure to not leave anything inside the vehicle where it is visible to those passing by. Remember, a curious burglar can even be lured by a duffle bag, interested in what it contains.

Set boundaries for young people. Depending on the location, it doesn't take much to easily become disoriented and lost. Teach young people to stay put if they become lost. Wandering around many times makes it more difficult for them to be found. Also, for young people's safety, they should be escorted to and from the restrooms.

Review any camping area regulations for conduct, items that are or are not permitted, fire regulations and more. In addition, find out from park signs or staff what types of plants and wildlife should be avoided. Report crimes and other problems to those responsible for the park or local law enforcement.

Have a great trip and don't forget the marshmallows!

Drugs: The Result

METHAMPHETAMINE -- You've probably heard of it, read the news of those impacted by its use or even seen the devastating effects, but do you really know what all the fuss is about this drug? It begins with addiction; this IS an extremely addictive drug that can destroy the lives of users and producers as well as those around them.

Methamphetamine (Meth) alters the brain's level of dopamine, a naturally occurring chemical that influences feelings of pleasure, motivation and appetite. As users become more addicted and their use of the drug expands, there are significant psychological and physiological impacts.



Anxiety, violent behavior, paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, sensations of bugs crawling under your skin; all these effects sure don't sound like an enjoyable experience! Unfortunately, these are many of the effects that potential users fail to think of before they begin using the drug. As usage of the drug progresses, users begin to show physical signs such as extreme weight loss leading to anorexia in some cases, damage to teeth, sores and abscesses due to itching.

If you know of someone who uses or makes Methamphetamine, every day of inaction is another day in the progress of addiction. To find a treatment program visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services treatment plan locator at www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov.

Is your son or daughter in need of intervention? There are many organizations throughout the country that can help. For a listing of resources and ideas of how you can help your child visit www.drugfree.org.

The Monthly 2do List



Update Your Password



"ABC123", "E-I-E-I-O", "PASSWORD"...What's your password? No, don't tell us or anyone else, but do you know for sure that no else knows your password? Unfortunately, It's impossible to be completely sure that your password is secure. With countless spyware programs and other intrusive actions, there's no telling when your password may become (or has become) jeopardized.

However, we're not just talking about the password to your home computer, but all the other things in our lives that are controlled by passwords, from our email to banking cards, social networking sites or even our voicemail. It's all "protected" with that secret combination that *should* only be known by you.

You certainly don't want to find out that your best-kept secret is in the wrong hands when you look in your bank account only to find it doesn't have quite the balance you expected, or your personal information has been taken from your computer.

To reduce the potential of unauthorized intrusion into your personal information, computer, finances and more, it's important to have a complex password. One that is very difficult to figure out ("PASSWORD" is probably about one of the worst!) and can even be a challenge for unlawful computer programs designed to crack passwords.

However, not only should your password be difficult to guess for an intruder but it needs to be changed frequently. Now is the time, today, to update your password.

Consider using passwords that don't directly connect with you (passwords NOT to use include birthdays, middle names, anniversaries, etc.) Instead, a combination of numbers, letters (upper and lower capitalization) and symbols can make for a very secure password. In some applications you can only use numbers (such as banking accounts). In these situations, again consider using numbers that do not reflect anything that may identify you, but rather truly random numbers.

Make your password change today!



**THE CRIME PREVENTION CONNECTION
SERVICE TO UTAH POLICE DEPARTMENTS
IS THROUGH A GRANT PROVIDED TO THE
UCOPA BY THE UTAH COMMISSION ON
CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE.**

