

Is Posting Children's Pictures Online Dangerous?

Contributed by Stacy Shattuck
Wednesday, 22 March 2006

Is posting family pictures online dangerous? Does it put your children at risk of being abducted by someone with dark motives? Learn whether this fear is fact or fallacy.

{mosbotwordcount}

It seems more and more parents are becoming concerned about the dangerous unknown we call the World Wide Web. There has been recent concern about posting normal, family related pictures. Is posting a family picture online for others to see really putting your child at danger?

{bot_wrgoogle}Our organization works online with pedophiles every day. Real ones. Our abuse prevention programs are based on the information we gathered by infiltrating internet circles of them to learn how they act. Such first hand research gives us a unique perspective to answer this question that nobody else can.

First you must ask yourself.....how likely is this? In reality, the fear that a pedophile is somehow going to see your child's picture, then become obsessed, go through the nearly impossible feat to identify your child in the first place, then develop an elaborate plan to somehow abduct your child, is about as likely as your child being hit with a small asteroid, twice in the same day.

Pedophiles are opportunists. While they may have preferences as to the way a child looks, the children they molest are based on the ones they have an opportunity to be around. And yes, nearly every pedophile is around children every day. We catch less than one percent of them, and they exist in a population well into the millions, likely into the tens of millions in the United States alone. Our organization has recently come up with mathematical equations based on the most widely accepted numbers, indicating that around one in every 20-30 adults has active pedophile tendencies.

This fear of a pedophile finding your child's picture online, and then stalking your child for evil purposes, is nothing more than an urban legend. It has never happened, nor is it likely to in the future. It is simply not how they work. They do not need to go through elaborate heists to get children. Most are around kids every day. Even the ones who aren't and might consider an abduction, are going to search for the easiest victim. They will pick one out based on their geographic location, not go through great lengths to try and find and stalk a child's picture they saw on the internet.

While the fear parents have about this may be real, it is unfounded. A thief is not going to spend days fumbling on a solid steel lock with a thousand tumblers, when the door 3 feet away is already open and swinging in the wind. Likewise, a pedophile will not take the most difficult, complex route to a victim.

The only real justification to such a claim, is that pedophiles are picture collectors. Sometimes they do peruse through photo sites for pictures of children. However, the reality is this: The most common internet pictures of random kids used by pedophiles are taken with a telescopic lens, and without you even knowing about it. Beach pictures, in the mall, walking down the street. The family pictures you take and distribute to relatives without the help of the internet are much more likely to end up in the hands of a pedophile, and still may end up online anyway. While it is a discomfoting thought for parents to think that pictures of their child may ever be viewed by a pedophile, short of locking your child in the basement, it is a reality of the age. Picture sharing over the web is a convenience. It is something loved by family and friends. When we breed a society where innocent pictures are too dangerous to be shared, then all we've done is added another atrocity.

Society would be much better off, if we could stop wasting time on these misguided fears, and instead apply the same effort to abuse prevention. Lost in all this is the fact that nearly every incident of sexual abuse is preventable, with simple steps that parents can take. The media has done a great disservice to the public, by focusing on the problem of sexual abuse from the extreme fraction of a percent, and reinforcing traditional views of pedophiles which are far from accurate.

If parents don't understand the way they work and act, you can't protect your children. The ploys pedophiles use can be stopped, if parents simply take the time to address the things that make their children vulnerable to begin with. With simple steps that nearly every parent can take, just about every molester can be kept at bay.

We understand that it can be hard to find ways to address this topic with your kids, which is why we offer safety programs that teach kids how to defeat abuse simply by reading them a children's book. Each book addresses a different concept in abuse prevention, and over the series your children will learn the skills they need to stop just about any attack. Instead of creating new things to fear as parents, let's go on the attack to ensure that our kids are protected.

For a variety of free information and safety book downloads, on this and other important child safety issues, please visit us at:

www.keepyourchildsafe.org