



School's Out! Cyber Safety is In.

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Media Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007
Bill Cosh, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – The internet offers a world of opportunities for entertainment and communication, but there are risks too. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection asks parents and guardians to talk with their children about how to be safe, secure, and responsible when surfing the worldwide web.

“There are many online threats including malware, email phishing scams, and unexpected in-app charges that kids could run into,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Explain these risks to your children and use parental monitoring features on devices and web browsers to limit problems before they arise.”

Follow these tips to help your children make smart cyber choices over the summer break:

- **Restrict access to age-appropriate content by using parental controls.** There are specific kid-friendly search engines that limit results to sites that are suitable for children. Consider locking devices with a password so your children can't download or purchase any apps without your approval.
- **Be smart about smartphones.** If you want your children to have a smartphone in order to stay connected over the summer, understand the capabilities of the device. Research apps and try them out yourself. Download and install software updates and set the phone to lock automatically with a password. Turn off in-app purchase capabilities.
- **Teach your children what NOT to click.** Clicking on links in unexpected text messages or in pop-up windows could infect a device with malware and put the family at greater risk of identity theft.
- **Establish rules for downloading.** Teach kids to be wary of exciting offers for “free stuff” that prompt them to act immediately and provide personal information. These pitches are likely either malware transmission ploys or “phishing” traps set to steal their personal information.
- **Talk to your kids about the importance of privacy.** Make sure they understand not to share personally identifiable information (PII), especially on social media sites. PII can include their full name, birth date, home address, telephone number, email address, or Social Security number.

You may not have the summer off with your children, but you can take steps to ensure their safety and protect their identities in your absence.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128 or send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov.

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