

ChildrenOnline

Devoted to the safety of children and teens online

Phone: 413-214-1225

A Division of Web Safe Consulting

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3. [FedEx Alert](#)
4. [More FedEx Spam Malware from Sophos.com](#)
5. [Fake FedEx Emails Flood the Web](#)
6. [10,000 Hotmail passwords mysteriously leaked to web - Phishing booty free for taking](#)
 By Dan Goodin;
 Posted in Security,
 5th October 2009
7. [Spammers jump on Gmail, Hotmail mass-hack gravy train](#) By Dan Goodin; Posted in

Issue: #29

October 2009

29th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.

As we begin another academic year focusing on the safe and healthy use of the Internet and telecommunications by teens and children, we turn our attention to one of the most basic forms of telecommunication... Email. Email, one of the oldest forms of telecommunication, is often seen as one of the safest ways for children and teens to communicate online. However, this is far from true, for both adults and children. Many of today's biggest concerns about the use of email affect children and adults alike. While adults are much more capable of navigating telecommunications, children and teens often misunderstand and misinterpret emails, instant messages and texting. We are especially concerned about younger children's use of email, as we have seen children as young as eight using email accounts opened for their exclusive use, as opposed to shared accounts with a parent.



Web-based email providers litter the Internet making it possible for anyone to create an account in seconds. In fact, we recommend that older teens and adults keep throwaway email accounts to give to requesting websites and commercial services instead of their personal accounts. Sites such as Google's Gmail, Yahoo, Juno, Hotmail (Windows Live Hotmail), and AIM Mail are some of the most popular web-based email service providers.

What are the risks today that come from using email? And how can we better educate our children and students to be "email-savvy"? How can we better protect ourselves, and our computers? That is the topic of this month's newsletter.

As always, we invite your comments, as well as ideas for future newsletters. Our telephone number for Children Online is 413-214-1225.

Best wishes,
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

Teaching Kids How to be Email Savvy

Security, 7th
October 2009

8. Fifty thousand new malware threats are discovered daily, according to Panda Labs Security.

A recent email scam:

I recently received an email from the 17-year old son of a friend. The email address was correct but the content, one strange link with no additional text, made me suspicious. I emailed him back and asked if he had sent me that link. He confirmed that his account had been hacked and used by scammers to send out links leading to a malware site.

[Click here](#) to see an image of the email I received.

Doug

How difficult is it for hackers to guess a password using programs called Password Crackers? It's easier than you think. Check out [How Hackers Will Crack Your Password](#) by Robert Graham at DarkReading.com. How long would it take a cracker to crack your password?

Our Internet safety curriculum contains a password quiz that

Conversation starters for children and parents:

How is email the same as communicating in person? How is it different?

And then followed by...

Do you always know who is reading your message?

Do you always know who you are "talking" to?

Is it easier or harder to express emotion?

Is it easier or harder for someone to misunderstand your message?

Is it easier or harder for someone to misunderstand your emotions?

Can your words exist long after you have spoken them?

Can your words reach people without your knowledge or permission?

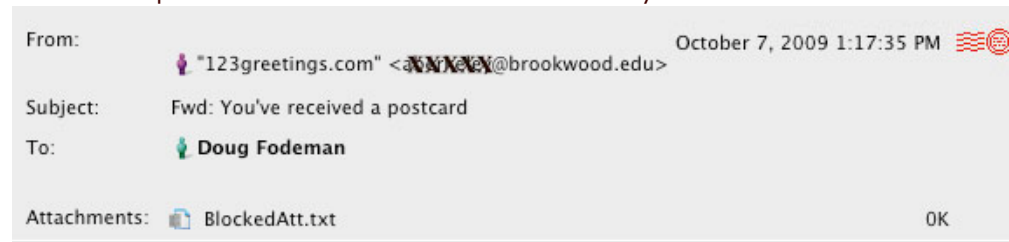
Can someone pretend to be you in an email?

Are you always certain that your message gets to your intended audience?

Can emails carry harmful or bad things?

Following a classroom discussion recently with sixth graders, the above questions seemed rhetorical. For the most part, they understood that emails can be read by many people, not just the intended recipient. They understood that emails can be forwarded, printed, copied, altered, and that once sent, the sender loses all control over the content of the email. They understood that it is generally harder to express emotion or even intention in the content of an email compared to RL (Real Life).

Some of them however didn't know that emails can easily be spoofed so that they appear to come from a "friend". One example has occurred frequently this fall with emails made to look as though they came from 123greetingcards.com, announcing that the recipient has received an e-card from a family member:



Good day.

Your family member has sent you an ecard from 123greetings.com.

Send free ecards from 123greetings.com with your choice of colors, words and music.

Your ecard will be available with us for the next 30 days.

If you wish to keep the ecard longer, you may save it on your computer or take a print.

To view your ecard, open zip attached file.

These links will show you two other spoofed emails from previous years: [Scam1](#), [Scam2](#).

All three of these e-greeting cards are tricks designed to manipulate the recipient into clicking a link or attachment that will cause a malware infection of their computer. (Notice that our firewall stripped the malware attachment from the email)

asks students (and adults) to rate their passwords using numerical scores based on good password practices versus poor practices. Most of the sixth graders I met with recently had scores in the negative values! (Top scores are 8 - 12 points.)

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to

above, stating that it had been blocked.) The malware could result in identity theft, theft of login credentials and passwords to a parent's bank accounts or credit cards, or nothing less than the complete control of a computer by a hacker.

In the past, what has concerned most parents and teachers about kids' use of email has been the dissemination of rumors, bullying, humiliation, violation of privacy, exposure to ridicule, etc as kids say things in email that shouldn't be said. These types of negative behaviors still persist today but, we feel, occur much less frequently than they do via instant messaging, texting and through the use of social networking sites.

However, the types of pranks or other hurtful behavior that kids sometimes play on one another using email pale in comparison to the dangers that pour into all of our in-boxes today, including our children. It is difficult for many adults to recognize what is risky or not. Children however, are easily fooled by very slick sophisticated tricks used by unscrupulous marketers, scammers, con artists and thieves online. And their mistakes can give thieves access to our bank accounts and credit cards, result in identity theft or turn our computers into a spammer's spambot. Identity theft using children's personal information is on the rise this year. We all need to teach our children/students, and ourselves, how to recognize the most common tricks and methods used by scammers. We parents also need to re-evaluate whether or not our younger children ought to have email accounts for their exclusive use.

Here are some email rules to live by:

1. Don't open emails from anyone you don't recognize. This may not always be a problem. However, it is always good advice for children and teens. Emails can be used to attack computers with viruses or malware. Malicious emails are usually sent from addresses that you don't recognize. At the very least, we need to teach kids to be careful and skeptical about what they read in unsolicited emails from strangers. Kids are easily fooled by emails beginning with sonyplaystation, lego, walmartrewards, etc... Be careful to avoid emails whose sender address does not match the name that proceeds the address. E.g. (John Smith <respnd21@roxxoff.com>)
2. Do NOT open or click on any links or attachments that arrive unexpectedly. While some may be appropriate links to photos or articles, children and teens can be easily tricked into clicking a link that actually contains a virus, Trojan or other malware. The best advice for children/teens is to avoid clicking links in emails.
3. Emails can be made to look like they come from anyone, anywhere, even the Pope and President Obama. Tell children and teens to be very careful when opening these type of emails, especially those that seem to come from someone famous or unexpected emails from well known and recognizable organizations or companies such as CNN, ABC news, etc. That also includes emails that have been spoofed to look like they came from our own accounts! Spammers often use this trick because people will often open emails that seem to have been sent from their own accounts because they are curious as to what they contain.
4. There is very little legislation or oversight protecting our email from scams, identity theft or viruses and other malware. Children and teens need careful

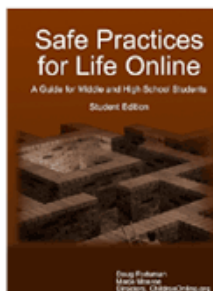
thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

- monitoring to help them use email safely.
5. ChildrenOnline recommends that students younger than 6th grade should not have their own personal private email accounts.
 6. Teach children to be respectful, kind and responsible in all email communication. Encourage them not to put into an email (or IM, text or social network) anything they wouldn't want to have published for the world to see, including parents, teachers, and other friends.
 7. Encourage children and teens to use strong passwords of **at least 8 characters** and to never share their password with anyone BUT PARENTS!

INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children Online has a curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting facts for students.

To learn more or place an order visit our [publications page at ChildrenOnline.org](#) or go directly to our publisher's pages:
[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)
[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

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