



## *Windows of Opportunity:* Making your Computer a Tool of Safety and Reliability

*Parents need not fear the “window to the world” that is provided through the home computer when they have taken the precautions to make the computer a safe, useful device. Used wisely, the computer and the Internet are valuable resource for bringing the light of “the good, the true, and the beautiful” into our homes.*

Educate yourself about the tools available to you:

- Tools to help assure that what your children see and hear on the Internet is appropriate, and to protect them from online predators
- Tools to help your children manage their time using the computer and the Internet wisely
- Tools to help keep your computer system functioning at its best (eliminating Spyware and Adware)



### *The Thirty-Minute Solution*

In **thirty minutes** or less you can significantly improve your family's **safety online**



*In thirty minutes you can...*

- 🕒 **Move all computers** to a heavily-traveled, public area in your home. Never allow computer in a child's bedroom!
- 🕒 **EDUCATE YOURSELF** about Internet safety, then have a **Family Home Evening** to educate your children. (Visit [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)).
- 🕒 **Post computer and Internet use rules** near your computer. Make specific rules about chatting online, and visiting chat rooms on the Internet.
- 🕒 **Teach children to immediately turn off the monitor** when they accidentally access inappropriate material.
- 🕒 **Assure your children that they can talk to you** about anything they see or hear on the Internet that makes them uncomfortable without fear of losing their personal computer privileges. Otherwise, experiences with inappropriate content will go unreported.
- 🕒 **Invest in appropriate software.** Internet filtering, parental control, and computer protection software (or a suite that includes all three) are “*must haves*” not conveniences.

## *Keep Children Safe Online* (Internet Safety and Filtering)

[www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) - The LDS Church Website includes lots of information for parents concerned with the appropriate use of media. Click “Gospel Library,” then find “Study Selected Topics” in the right-hand navigation bar. Select “Media: Internet” from the drop-down list to access resources provided by the church for wise Internet use.

[www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) is a goldmine of information for parents, children and teens for staying safe online. If you only have one Family Home Evening this year, consider taking your information from this site. The NetSmartz Workshop® is an interactive, educational safety resource from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC) and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). For a listing of other “Internet Safety” resources: <http://www.netsmartz.org/resources/resources.htm>

**Filters** - With a little research, you can review several content filters and choose the one that works best for your family. Here is one example of a review that could be considered: <http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/>

**Chat Rooms** - Download a must-read pamphlet for parents and teens about how chat rooms, Instant Messaging (IM), Peer-to-Peer (P2P) systems, and spyware work, and how to stay safe online. [http://www.missingkids.com/adccouncil/pdf/talk/teensafety\\_eng.pdf](http://www.missingkids.com/adccouncil/pdf/talk/teensafety_eng.pdf)

## *Help Children Use Computer Time Wisely* (Parental Control software)

“Five more minutes, Mom!” One of the difficulties with computers and Internet (as with other media) is their tendency to be “addictive.” Parental Control software can help, and there are many different options to choose from. (Type “parental control” into your Internet browser to access dozens of options. Some vendors have been provided below.

*(Note: This document does not endorse any of these software programs as being more effective than another, and the list is not meant to be all-inclusive).*

Common features of “Parental Control” products allow you to:

- **Monitor sites visited** and receive e-mail or cell phone notification when your children try to access dangerous or inappropriate sites ([www.cybersentinel.com](http://www.cybersentinel.com))
- **Set time limits.** Give your child access to the computer for pre-determined amount of time each day, and program the computer to “turn itself off” at bedtime: [www.akrontech.com](http://www.akrontech.com) (enuff), [www.offthecomputer.com](http://www.offthecomputer.com), [www.kidswatch.com](http://www.kidswatch.com).
- **Turn off all or part of the Internet.** (Allows a child to use the Internet to do homework but NOT to chat or Instant Message with friends). [www.max.com](http://www.max.com), [www.contentwatch.com](http://www.contentwatch.com) (ContentProtect), [www.cybersitter.com](http://www.cybersitter.com)

- **Prevent your child from supplying “personal information”** such as address or phone number while online. ([www.NetNanny.com](http://www.NetNanny.com), MacAfee Parental controls)

## *Protect your computer from malicious content and keep it running smoothly*

1. **De-gunk your computer:** You unclutter the junk drawer in your kitchen, clean your closets occasionally, and even de-junk the file cabinet. “De-gunking” your computer will help it run more efficiently, and help eliminate pop-up ads and other annoying problems. An article by Jeff Duntemann, published by *PCMagazine* takes you step-by-step: [http://www.pcmag.com/print\\_article2/0,2533,a=131774,00.asp](http://www.pcmag.com/print_article2/0,2533,a=131774,00.asp)

2. **Eliminate Adware and Spyware:**

- **“Adware”** is the term that describes annoying (but legitimate) programs that you consented (probably unwittingly) to have installed on your PC. Adware comes with an installer and can be easily removed from your system. (Click “Start”, then “Control Panel,” then “Add/Remove Programs” and look for the culprit).
- **Spyware** is the term for a program that installs itself without permission, and is nearly impossible to remove without assistance.

Both adware and spyware slow your connection, spy on the sites you surf, and can even re-direct your Web browser. Computer magazines regularly rate the best spyware removal tools. The April 2005 issue of *PCWorld Magazine* recommends several options, and some of them are free: <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,119572,00.asp>

3. **Make sure your computer is secure**

- Review your home computer’s security features to be sure you are protected from security issues such as viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spam, phishing, spyware, hacking, etc. This article, published by *PCMagazine* will help: [http://www.pcmag.com/print\\_article2/0,2533,a=143241,00.asp](http://www.pcmag.com/print_article2/0,2533,a=143241,00.asp)
- There are several organizations dedicated to helping computer users understand and eliminate potential security threats. [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org) is a public service made available by a wide range of Internet industry corporations and public interest organizations. The goal is to “keep you “one click away” from the resources you need to make informed decisions about your family’s use of the Internet.” The site provides ratings for different internet tools, including filtering software.
- The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) has sent out a National “Call to Action” to all Americans under the premise that securing our personal computers plays a crucial role in protecting our nation’s Internet infrastructure. You’ll find a list of the “Top Ten Cyber Security Tips” to keep your family and your computer safe. Visit <http://www.staysafeonline.info>

