



SIMPLY SURFING SAFELY

Going online can be a great way to meet people. In the safety and privacy of your room, you can connect with someone who shares your interests and tastes, likes and dislikes, either for friendship or dating.

Chatting online is relatively safe, although some media outlets certainly portray the Internet as a great big scary monster. Of course, there are always dangers in situations involving dating and sex, but, if you are aware of the risks, you can protect yourself.

The key is to use your common sense and trust your instincts. Put your safety first and don't take any chances. Here are a few tips:

Too Much Information

When creating your profile online, do not put too much information about yourself out there. Whether on myspace, match.com or any other site, all of your details are available to the public. Posting an address, phone number, or even your full name can lead to problems down the road.

Avoid putting any information that would lead a stranger to find you.

You Look Better on MySpace

Some people are not who they say they are online. They create fake profiles or modify their pictures and information to seem more attractive. Their deceptions can lead to disappointment if you ever decide to meet in person.

Don't believe everything you see and hear online.

Embarrassment of Riches

Don't post anything online that you wouldn't want *everyone* to see – for a long, long time. When you post a story, a blog, or a video online, it can be seen by anyone, anywhere forever. Think twice before posting something that may cause embarrassment down the road when found by a potential partner or employer.

Remember: What happens on the Internet, stays on the Internet.

Meeting Out

If you decide to meet an online friend in person, plan for your safety. Bring a friend. Meet in a public place (coffee shop, restaurant). Do not go off alone with anyone. If you feel uncomfortable, excuse yourself and leave. Don't give the person any personal information, let him see your driver's license, or leave your purse unattended. If you feel unsafe, seek help from police, security, or other staff.

For more information on Internet Safety, visit www.dayoneri.org.