



**Transcript – Live chat with the Director of CyberAngels
December 2001**

ctv_will: Welcome to Court TV Online chats.

In a little while we're going to be talking to internet lawyer
Parry Aftab about safe surfing.

Is it dangerous out there or is it all a bunch of paranoia?

What should you know about privacy, hackers, cyberstalkers, spam, and protecting
yourself on the web?

Here are some stats from the literature that came with our guest's book...

60% of 11,000 teens surveyed have filled out a questionnaire or form online and given out
personal information.

12% have agreed to meet in person with someone they met online.

61% have received pictures online.

30% have been in a chat room where the discussion made them feel uncomfortable.
(hopefully not this one) :)

30% have read hateful messages, and 15% have read messages on the web that have
threatened violence.

and 60% have admitted to engaging in cybersex.

Would you rather kids have cybersex than real sex?

Are the dangers of the internet only "virtual?"

The guest, once again, is Parry Aftab, author of "The Parent's guide to protecting your
children in cyberspace."

and executive director of cyberangels.org.

that's <http://www.cyberangels.org/>

We did a hacker chat not too long ago and everyone wanted to know how to protect
themselves, so here's the person to ask.

How do you avoid getting annoying ads?

How do you get rid of a stalker?

Faygo, your question is the first one on the list.

Don't be afraid to ask tough ones, Ms. Aftab is a smart woman, she can handle it.

Ok, I'm going to get Parry Aftab online and then we'll get started.

Keep those questions coming.

brb...

ctv_will: Ok, ready to go.

ctv_will: Welcome Ms. Aftab.

Parry Aftab: :)

faygo_kitty_1313 asks: most kids know what to do on the net why do you feel the need to put the idea in my moms head that im not old enough to understand that people are nuts and will kill me if i tell them certain things

Parry Aftab: Although many kids understand the risks, too many of them are still getting into trouble with cyberpredators.

Last year the FBI opened 1500 new cases against people who were attempting to lure children into offline meetings.

It's great that you understand the risks, and hopefully you'll help us teach others learn how to enjoy the internet safely.

If we don't teach parents that their kids can use the internet safely, too many parents will keep their kids offline, and that's the real danger.

You can drop by <http://www.cyberangels.org/> and sign up for our Teenangels program if you're interested.

ctv_will: Do you think there is a different breed of kid out there than parents realize? More savvy?

Parry Aftab: No matter how savvy the kids are, every survey we do of kids tells us that about 12 or 13 percent meet strangers offline.

We just did a survey of 11,000 teenage girls at seventeen.com and those surveys matched the results of surveys I've done of children around the country.

They know the risks, but they don't always pay attention to them.

modestalmond asks: What are cookies exactly and how can you get rid of them?

Parry Aftab: Cookies, not the girl scout kind, are text files.

It allows web sites to store information about you on YOUR computer and every time you go to that site, they retrieve that information and update it.

But cookies are not all bad.

It's the cookie that allows you to register one time at a site and go back and use your ID and password instead of having to re-register and fill out the form every time.

And it's the cookie that allows you to buy more than one item in your online shopping cart.

So knowing when to accept a cookie and when to reject one is very important.

You can set your browser to notify you every time someone wants to put a cookie on your machine and then you can decide at that time whether you want to accept or reject it.

daisypusher23 asks: Kids shouldn't even be on the web.

Parry Aftab: The greatest risk our children face in connection with the internet is being denied access to the internet.

But it is essential that our children understand how to surf safely.

It's really no different than teaching them how to drive a car responsibly.

It's a powerful tool which when misused can hurt people but can change our lives when used properly.

daisypusher23 asks: Is there any way to know if you are being hacked or spied on?

jeanna1843 asks: If I don't have 'firewall' installed in my computer, am I easily be the target of this 'nuke' thing?

Parry Aftab: Generally, unless you're in IRC, which has special rules, a hacking program, typically a "trojan horse" has to be downloaded through an attachment. You should never be accepting an attachment from anyone, even people you know, without running that attachment through a good anti-virus and anti-hacking program. And remember that your anti-hacking/virus program is only as good as its last update, so update it frequently.

modestalmond asks: Are there any web sites that help with safe surfing, we just got the net and my mom is panicky about net safety.

Parry Aftab: For net safety, <http://www.cyberangels.org/familyguidebook.com>

and buy my new book, "The Parent's Guide to Protecting Your Children in Cyberspace" it's only about 10 dollars on Amazon.

and you can buy it by clicking the link on the cyberangels site.

If you buy it from our site, Amazon makes a donation to cyberangels.

For viruses and hacking, symantec is a good one.

And a new one that just helped me this week is nohack.net

ctv_will: What about software and filters?

Parry Aftab: I'm pro-choice when it comes to filtering.

There's a lot filtering can do and there's more it can't do.

When children are ten and under, I advise to use parental controls or some type of technology to protect the kids.

But even if you're using filtering, children should be educated about online risks and about how to exercise responsible judgment.

The new book has a chart comparing the products and how well they block different kinds of info.

And what else they do.

For example, there are other services that aren't filters but are designed to keep kids safe. Yahoorigans is an example of that. It's a child's search engine run by Yahoo.

When you search for sex you get a lot more about the sex life of turtles than you'd like to know. LOL! :)

snoopy_neptune asks: What is cybersex?

Parry Aftab: It's interesting, when we did our survey at seventeen.com, 60% of the 11,000 teenage girls we surveyed said that they had cybersex, but they never really described what that meant to them.

One woman said that although she's had cybersex, she doesn't go all the way.

Generally cybersex, which is referred to online as cyber, is when you have graphic sexual discussions and live out sexual fantasies online.

It's like phone sex, but you type instead.

ogio_1 asks: Is there any way to stop the huge numbers of pop-up's when my child goes to a xxx site by mistake??

Parry Aftab: The reason there are so many pop ups at adult sites, is because they are paid for advertising based upon the number of visitors to the site.

Every time a new window pops up, they count it as another visit to a new site. Usually the only way to get out when that starts to happen is by shutting down and getting back online.

modestalmond asks: How do you know which site are safe and which aren't?

Parry Aftab: A good way of finding out if a site is safe or not is to see if it's received any awards or seals of approval from groups you trust.

For example, cyberangels has a list of sites that have been awarded our safe site seal. If you go to a site iwth our seal, you know it's been reviewed and determined to be safe for kids.

Next, you should alwyas make sure that the site has a privacy policy.

Read it. If you don't like what they have to say about how they're going to use your information, go to another site.

After April 21st, the law will change that will put in extra protection for children under the age of 13 that will keep them much safer.

modestalmond asks: I was told that hotmail is unsafe to use, is it?

Parry Aftab: One of the biggest problems and complaints I receive about hotmail is that when parents discover their kids have a hotmail account and want to shut it down, hotmail won't cooperate.

Instead, parents are told to make sure their kids don't use the account for 120 days at which point it will disappear on its own.

With this new law, hotmail will be required to shut down accounts if the children are under the age of 13.

ctv_will: Is there a lot of legislation pending about restricting the Internet?

Parry Aftab: Yes, there is a lot of pending legislation, but COPPA is an existing law that doesn't go into effect until April.

There are more than 100 new bills pending about the Internet.

faygo_kitty_1313 asks: why are most kids idiots and have no respect for adults i mean im a 15/f and i respect every one but most kids at my school are just a**holes to every one?

Parry Aftab: A large part of the work I do is protecting other people from kids.

And a large part of the book is teaching parents how to keep their kids out of trouble.

Many hackers, cyberstalkers and flammers are kids.

They think they're just kidding around, but law enforcement is now prosecuting 5th graders who make death threats online.

There's no margin of excusing kids for just being kids anymore.

ctv_will: So you think it's a problem that kids are learning to be kids online?

Parry Aftab: I don't think kids learn how to be kids online.

I think kids are kids offline, unfortunately they grow up really fast online, especially if they're not supervised or taught how to stay out of trouble.

nitz_fredrich asks: okay how will they know if the kids are under 13?

jeanna1843 asks: How would the sites know if the user is under age?

Parry Aftab: If the site expects most of their users to be under 13 or they target young children, or they ask the age of their site visitors, they're expected to comply with the law. It will be very difficult to enforce the law and to teach the children's web sites how to comply with this law.

ogio_1 asks: I seem to get a lot of junk mail through my ISP. When I try to remove myself from the mail lists, all I get are broken links. Is there anything I can do??

Parry Aftab: That's because spammers, people who send you that junk mail, use fake return addresses, so that all the junk mail they send out results in bounced e-mail and people complaining about what they receive, they won't have to deal with it. Never reply to a spammed message because in the event that the return address is real, they now know that you take the time to read spam, and they will send you a lot more, as well as sell your address to others.

Most ISP's have spam filters.

Ask your ISP what they can do to help you with spam.

But there is no surefire way of preventing it.

It's a big problem and the one place where we need a new law to protect us.

imjat_cool asks: Somebody had access to my Yahoo ID and sent messages to my friends , How can I prevent that from happening ?

Parry Aftab: It's very important that you don't share your password with anyone- especially your friends.

The only way that they can send something as you is if you share your password with them or if they hack into your computer to get your password (using a trojan horse) or your password can be guessed very easily.

Notify Yahoo and your friends and set up a new account right away.

Also check your computer and make sure that you haven't been hacked before you set up the new program.

You have to use one of the programs like McAfee or Norton or what you can get at nohack.net.

modestalmund asks: I'm afraid to use my real age on-line 'case i don't want to be targeted by predators, does that mean I'm breaking the law?

Parry Aftab: No.

But you don't ever have to give anyone your age at all.

You don't have to lie, tell them you don't give our your age online.

psychoceladon asks: There is someone at my InsideTheWeb message board harrasing me. I know they won't do anything about it. What can I do?

Parry Aftab: You can come to cyberangels.

We are the largest internet safety and help group in the world and we have a special team that helps people who are being harrassed or stalked online.

Drop by the site, send us an e-mail and we'll make sure someone helps you.

This is an increasing problem online.

We educate people how to avoid cyberstalking, we help them trace the person stalking them, and we help them, if they want to, report it to law enforcement.

I get a bazillion cases a day on this.
Readers Digest is doing a whole original article on it.
Unfortunately people can be very rude online and do things they would never dream of doing offline.

belzu asks: at what point does what we say on-line become evidence in any case? should it be protected the same way as spoken and written speech is?

Parry Aftab: Even more.

My mother always told me, never put anything in writing that you're not prepared to read. And things people say online have been held not to be private and are discoverable in legal proceedings.

You leave a trail of cyberbreadcrumbs everywhere you go online.

modestalmond asks: What's your point of view on chat rooms?

Parry Aftab: I think chat rooms can be fun, but I think people need to understand the rules of safe chatting and how to avoid problems that may result from a chat.

I also believe that children shouldn't be allowed to chat with strangers in unmonitored rooms unless they're prepared to handle talking to strangers.

That means they need to know what info they can share and not share in a chat room.

There are many good chat rooms for kids...

headbone.com

freezone.com

and surfmonkey.com

are three good examples of chats that are safe for kids.

gocartboy2000 asks: Hi is their a way to stop nude trading in chat rooms?

Parry Aftab: Any time you give out a photo online, you risk that someone will misuse it and post it for everyone to see on the internet.

If the chat room is trading child porn, we work with law enforcement to put the traders in jail.

Otherwise, if they're just consenting adults, people need to understand the risks involved before they exchange nude photos with strangers.

They also have to be prepared to face the consequences if things go wrong.

raistlyn_calderon asks: are programs such as icq safe to run?

Parry Aftab: They're safe programs to run, but you have to know the special risks involved when you're using instant messaging of any type.

When you fill out the registration form for ICQ, if you don't fill out the privacy setting, the info you give them will be made public.

We've had many situations where people have been stalked off line using info they gave out online.

If your kids are using any instant messaging, make sure they can only receive messages from people they know and block others from being able to add them to their buddy list without your permission.

Everything on the Internet can be safe if used properly.

modestalmond asks: What is cyberangels exactly?

Parry Aftab: Cyberangels has more than 1300 volunteers around the world.

It's an all volunteer network of people who want to help others online.

We work with law enforcement to identify and prosecute cyberpredators and child pornographers around the world.

We help teach parents online and offline about internet safety.

We have programs for children online and offline to teach them how to exercise good judgment in cyberspace.

We have a list of safe sites which we allow to use our seal.

We help senior citizens who are being scammed and people who are being harrassed and cyberstalked.

ctv_will: Ok, we have to let Ms. Aftab go there.

Thanks very much for taking this time with us.

Parry Aftab: Thank you.

ctv_will: Ms. Aftab's book just came out last month, I don't know if you can find it at the library yet.

If not, <http://www.cyberangels.org/> or Amazon is the place to go.

She mentioned the child porn police, and I have a good story about that.

I was recently invited to an online club called "Preteen Girl" by someone claiming to be a cybercop who was trying to catch pedophiles.

I didn't udnerstand why he wanted me to join or what he wanted me to do exactly, so I sent him a bunch of questions in an e-mail.

He never responded.

I mentioned this to Ms. Aftab who said that there are a lot of fake cybercops out there who are really pedophiles.

It's important to know that child porn is the biggest taboo out there, so don't go near it. Just having it on your computer can get you arrested.

gebh_68022 asks: what do you mean, special risks?

ctv_will: I'm not sure what you're referring to, but I'm going to go ahead and tell another story.

I watched a demo of a cyberstalker- actually, it was a cop showing how cyberstalkers operate.

He went into a girls' soccer chat room with a fake ID and started a conversation.

In the course of conversation he talked about being a female high school soccer player and asked where others played.

He then told what his number (on his shirt) was, and others responded with theirs.

Now all he had to do was find the school and go to a game and he'd be able to pick out exactly who he had just spoken to online.

So it's not all about what you put in your profile, a lot has to do with what you say out loud.

Something that I found interesting about this chat is that there's kind of a paradox in what Ms.Aftab is working toward.

On the one hand, you want privacy enforced, so no one will know anything about you. But on the other hand, you want sites to know who they're talking to so they don't show anything inappropriate to kids- like that law she mentioned for kids under 13.

How can you have both?

How can hotmail know if you're 13 and to close your account when you're trying to hide the fact that you're 13 so no sickos try to pick you up?

Tough question.

Oh, before I forget, pardon me while I run some credits for the record....

This chat was brought to you by the good folks at Court TV Online
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and if you get a chance, check out our CTV Yahoo club at
clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/theofficialcourttvclub

psychoceladon asks: It's really easy to TELL your mom that you haven't been talking to your online boyfriend online. But, how can parents make sure they aren't?

ctv_will: Parents can make sure that the only messenger the kid is using is something like ICQ where you can only talk to people on the buddy list.

And there is a setting where someone can only get in touch if they are approved.

Then the parent can keep track of who's on the buddy list.

Ultimately though, if the kid goes into a chat room and meets the boyfriend there, there's no way to stop that except to keep an eye on her.

And of course, to raise her not to do anything stupid in the first place.

I think that's one of the biggest dangers with these computers. They're not just TVs with more buttons.

I hope parents aren't thinking they can just leave kids in front of the computer as a surrogate parent/babysitter.

trent767 asks: HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN VICTIMS OF CRIMES AS A RESULT OF THE INTERNET

ctv_will: Quite a few, and the number is growing. I wish Ms. Aftab was here to give you the stat.

You can probably find out the exact number at cyberangels.org

More than the creepy rapist kind of crime you might think though, is the fraud kind.

People sending money to rip off artists and stuff like that. That's a new huge booming industry.

Or those idiots who post links to "earn money while you surf" and spam like that.

Umler51 asks: what does it take to get some one barred from the internet

ctv_will: I've heard of Yahoo removing people's IDs and stuff, but it takes a lot to be legally banned from the internet altogether.

You may be familiar with Kevin Mitnick, the famous cyberhacker who just got out of jail.

Part of his sentence is that he can't go online or even touch a computer.
But he was hacking major corporations.

[american_girl_in_korea](#) asks: what should i do those cyber geeks asking for cyber sex?

[ctv_will](#): First of all, get rid of that ID name.

That is just asking for creeps.

If you want to tell people about being in Korea, wait for it to come up in conversation.

Second, don't say anything.

That is to say, don't even say no. Just close the request and ignore the person.

Most of these guys/girls just want a reaction, and once you show them an opening, they'll keep at it.

Ug, there's the graphic for our next chat, next Tuesday. What an ugly graphic, I'll have to send them a different one. :P

Ok well, the next chat is Tuesday at 7pET

Until then, fear simple answers.

This chat has ended, you may go in peace. :)