In today’s technology-driven world, it is more important than ever for parents to discuss online safety with their children, said Gary Spurger, manager of the High Tech Crimes Unit at the Harris County sheriff’s office.

### INSIDE INFORMATION

**CYBER SAFETY**

- **1 in 4** children in the U.S. will be sexually solicited online.
- Since its inception in 1998, the CyberTipline has received more than **5.4 million** reports.
- In 2014 the national CyberTipline received **1.1 million** reports.
- In March, the Harris County sheriff’s office arrested **12 predators** who were soliciting minors.
- In an undercover operation in May, the Montgomery County Internet Crimes Against Children, or ICAC, task force arrested **26 predators** who were soliciting minors.

#### SEVERITY OF COMPUTER CRIMES

- **Class A misdemeanor:** impersonating someone by sending an electronic message that references identifying information and believing the recipient would believe that person authorized the message with intent to harm or defraud.
- **Ranges from class B misdemeanor to first-degree felony:** breach of computer security (gaining access to a computer without the consent of the owner)
- **State jail felony:** impersonating someone by making calls or sending messages from his or her phone with intent to harm.
- **Second-degree felony:** soliciting a minor under age 14.
- **Third-degree felony:** online harassment, soliciting a minor ages 14-16 or possessing or sending another person inappropriate photos of a minor

#### PASSWORD TIPS

- Strong passphrases are more difficult for computers to crack than strong passwords.
- A strong passphrase is made up of dissimilar different words in a sequence: `driveswamflewundergroundnoair`.

#### APPS TO WATCH FOR

- **Kik:** a messaging app that allows the user to enter chat rooms with anyone around the world
- **Snapchat:** a photosharing app that allows the photo to disappear after a set number of seconds and notifies users if a screenshot is taken of the photo (there are apps that will allow you to bypass this step and screenshot the photo without notification)
- **Qustodio:** can monitor up to five devices, can set limits on daily calls, texting and Internet usage on phones, tracks child’s location
- **PhoneSheriff:** monitor up to three devices, limit daily calls, texting and Internet usage on phones, review and approve apps on a child’s phone, tracks child’s location and will send a notification if a child leaves a set area

#### APPS FOR PARENTS

- **CyberTipline:** www.cybertipline.org
- **NCMEC hotline:** 1-800-THE-LOST
- **Harris County Precinct 4 dispatch:** 281-376-3472 (ask for Houston Metro ICAC), www.hmicac.org
- **Montgomery County ICAC tipline:** 936-760-6910

#### RESOURCES

- **Compiled by Liza Winkler**
- **Sources:** Harris County sheriff’s office, Montgomery County Precinct 5 constable’s office, netsmartz.org, Texas Penal Code/Community Impact Newspaper

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Do not trust everybody you meet online, and let a parent be involved in a potential offline meetup.

Be cautious of “checking in” at locations on Facebook and other apps, such as Foursquare.

Be wary of posting personal, inappropriate or illegal information or photos online, such as underage drinking.

In 2014 the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, or NCMEC, provided training for **300** law enforcement and juvenile justice personnel from **160** agencies in Texas on technology-related crimes against children.

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Kik: a messaging app that allows the user to enter chat rooms with anyone around the world

Qrusth, Grindr, Tinder and Skout

Snapchat: a photosharing app that allows the photo to disappear after a set number of seconds and notifies users if a screenshot is taken of the photo (there are apps that will allow you to bypass this step and screenshot the photo without notification)