Kids: Be a Good Cyber Citizen!

⚠️ The computer as a weapon (using a computer to commit a crime): If you use email and chat programs to hurt others, such as harassing someone or spreading myths, you are committing a crime.

⚠️ The computer as a target (using a computer to attack other computers): If you hack into school computer networks to view or change grades, shut down or deface websites, or create or send computer viruses, you are committing a crime.

⚠️ The computer as an accessory (using a computer to store illegal files or information): If you download and share copyrighted music, games, and other software without the permission of the owner or plagiarize copyrighted information and pass it off as your own, you are committing a crime.

Some things you do on the computer may seem okay to you, but they are actually crimes. Even if these cyber crimes are committed on the Internet, the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act makes using computers to commit crimes a federal offense. The U.S. Department of Justice describes three ways computers are used to commit crimes:

1. **Power of Information:**
   - **Do:** Have fun using the Internet to perform research and do homework. It can also be a great tool for learning new skills or exploring interest areas.
   - **Don't:** Use the computer to steal from people or animals. It’s not okay to break into someone’s computer to steal their identity or to steal money online.

2. **Power of Interconnection:**
   - **Do:** Communicate with friends and family. Computers even allow people who are separated by thousands of miles to talk to each other.
   - **Don’t:** Be a cyberbully. Bullying on the Internet is as bad as bullying in the hallway. Try to treat others as you want to be treated—be kind and respectful online.

3. **Power of Communication:**
   - **Do:** Use a cell phone as a tool for keeping in touch with friends and family. It’s okay to use the phone to call your parents or a friend to see if they’re home.
   - **Don’t:** Use the phone to get into trouble. It’s not okay to make a prank call, even if you’re just being a “jerk.” There are important reasons to be responsible with a cell phone:
     - **Beware of call splashing:** Call splashing can happen when you place a call from a phone that is not registered in your name, and later an expensive phone charge shows up on your phone bill.
     - **Tip:** Always know where you’re calling before you dial. While placing a call, make sure you are not calling an international number. Sometimes, even domestic calls you place will include extra numbers that resemble domestic long-distance calls. Make sure you are calling the right place.

Using a computer can be fun and exciting. It is also important to be responsible and safe when using a computer. Here are some guidelines to help you be a safe and responsible cyber citizen:

- **Know the Rules:** Follow the rules of the road when using the Internet. This means not using the Internet to hurt others.
- **Keep an Eye on the Clock:** Never spend more time online than you should. You need to do your homework, and you also need to spend time with friends and family.
- **Use the Right Tools:** Use the computer to do research and work on your homework. Use the computer to learn new skills.
- **Say No to Harassment:** If you receive an urgent message on your answering machine or pager requesting that you call a number to check for unauthorized charges, and then use your phone to call that number, you may be calling a scam.
- **Some Scam Numbers:** Scammers use phone numbers that resemble domestic long-distance calls. Beware of calling-card number scams.
- **Criminals can clone your cell phone by illegally copying your unique electronic serial number (ESN) and your cell phone number to check for unauthorized charges, and then use your phone service without your permission or knowledge.
- **Tip:** Always check your phone bill carefully to make sure there are no charges for services you don’t subscribe to. There are legitimate companies that make cell phone bill fraud possible:
  - **Crammers** take advantage of confusing phone bills by sneaking other charges onto your phone bill, figuring that you will not notice.
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