



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2009

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***Americans for Technology Leadership and Stop Child Predators
Recommend Five Easy Steps To Help Keep Kids Safe Online***
Groups also aim to increase awareness for Safer Internet Day

WASHINGTON – To help raise consumer awareness for Safer Internet Day, a day which promotes safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones among children and young people, *Americans for Technology Leadership* (ATL) and *Stop Child Predators* (SCP) encouraged Americans to follow five easy steps to help families stay safer online. The recommendations come on the heels of a major study published by the Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet & Society, which found that one of the greatest threats children face online comes from peers who bully or harass.

Randy Skoglund, the executive director of ATL, said, "Safer Internet Day is the perfect time to encourage all Americans to take a more active role in protecting our children from the dangers that exist online. The Internet is a great tool, but we need to inform our youth about the dangers they face from themselves, their peers, child predators, identity thieves, as well as threats from spam, viruses, phishing scams and privacy issues."

Stacie Rumenap, the executive director of SCP, was especially concerned about the increase of cyberbullying and the use of mobile phones to carry out the bullying. "According to the National Crime Prevention Council more than half of American teens are affected by cyberbullying. Unfortunately, many parents are largely unaware of this problem, as very few teens report incidences of bullying to their parents or other adults. We owe it to our kids to talk to them about interacting with their peers through these new technologies and providing ways to help secure a safer environment for them."

To help protect youth online, ATL and SCP recommend that families follow these five easy steps to help ensure their children's safety:

- Make sure kids respect one another online and abide by good behavior. They should not write or post anything that could bring harm to themselves or someone else. The web is a lot more public and permanent than it seems.
- Talk to your children about the responsibilities of being online and how their own behavior might put them and the family at risk. Make sure kids know they can come to you when something makes them feel uncomfortable without fear of losing their Internet privileges.
- Place the family computer in a common place in your house and use family safety software so you can restrict the websites your children visit, monitor who they contact, and limit the time they spend online.

- Tell your children that they should never physically meet with anyone they have only become “friends” with online. Kids may think they know them well, but they may be fooled.
- Make sure children know that they should never share personal information online, including their address, phone number, social security number, current school or when they will be on vacation. All of these things create a personal profile that a predator could use for nefarious purposes.

Both ATL and SCP have a record of educating the public about online threats and finding ways to combat them through several different initiatives. ATL works with elected officials to host their “Take Back the Net” events, which are community forums where citizens can learn how to stay safe online. In September ATL also staged a month-long “Back to School” campaign to help educate parents on ways to make sure their kids stayed safe online. SCP has a federal and state-by-state campaign to educate and inform the public about concrete policy changes that will enhance public safety by protecting America’s children from sexual predators.

Safer Internet Day takes place across the world on Tuesday, February 10, 2009. The initiative started in 2004, and last year over 120 organizations in 56 countries took part in the Safer Internet Day events. The global awareness day was created by Insafe, a network of national organizations that coordinates internet safety awareness in Europe. The network is set up and co-funded within the framework of the European Commission’s Safer Internet Plus Program.

To help consumers learn more about safer online practices and issues of importance to ATL and SCP visit www.techleadership.org or www.stopchildpredators.org.

Americans for Technology Leadership is a broad-based coalition of technology professionals, consumers and organizations dedicated to limiting government regulation of technology and fostering competitive market solutions to public policy issues affecting the technology industry.

Stop Child Predators brings together an influential team of policy experts and community leaders with the real-world experience and a track record of proven results to achieve these goals. Numerous organizations and individuals across the country are motivated by the shared goal of protecting children and holding their victimizers accountable. Stop Child Predators seeks to harness their work and expertise by making one concerted effort to produce meaningful and immediate results.

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