

# The Crime Reporter



Sponsored by TRICOM: Winnebago County Citizens, Businesses and Law Enforcement Working Together on Crime Prevention, Health and Safety

March/April 2010 Edition

## Protecting Wisconsin's Children from Internet Predators

Our kids are our most precious resource. Families work very hard to raise them, pass along values and traditions, educate them, and give them every opportunity to achieve their dreams. At the Department of Justice, we also work very hard to protect them. Nowhere is this commitment greater than in our efforts to fight Internet predators.

While the Internet has opened many doors for our children, from education to communication to entertainment, it has also become an active crime scene. Online sex predators use technology to connect with kids, using all the tools they use: instant messaging, picture and video trading, chat rooms, web cameras, web microphones, social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, and even online gaming networks like X-Box Live.

Child pornographers have invaded the Internet in many forms. Some use chat rooms to obtain and trade images and movies, while some simply use their own digital cameras, camcorders, or cell phones to manufacture images. As for cell phones, have you heard the term "sexting?" It refers to sexually explicit chat and photos through cellular telephones. Often, predators use cell phones after meeting children online.

### INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Be an Active Parent.** Keep open lines of communications with kids about Internet use. This process should begin as soon as a child gets online.
- **Prepare Your Children for the Online World as You Do the Real World.** Make no mistake, the online world is real, and so are its dangers. Talk to your children about the benefits and dangers of the Internet. You tell your kids not to jump into a stranger's car alone and why that's dangerous; tell them why they shouldn't travel the Internet Highway alone and why it's dangerous.
- **Watch Internet Use.** Internet predators are watching your kids online. You need to be, too. One suggestion: keep computers in common areas.
- **Use Software Resources.** Use filters that block inappropriate websites or online services that are harmful to kids. Consider installing monitoring software, which records everything kids do online, from instant messaging to videos to picture trading.
- **It's Not Just the Computer.** Find out how your kids are communicating and understand the technology. If you can't appropriately supervise use, don't allow it.
- **Report Online Exploitation.** Call local law enforcement or the Wisconsin ICAC Task Force at (608) 266-1671.
- **Find Out More.** Visit the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's "net smartz" websites. [www.netsmartz411.org](http://www.netsmartz411.org) is geared to help parents; [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org) includes information for parents, kids, educators, and law enforcement. We use these materials. You should too.



Established in 1994, the Tri-Communities Crime Reduction Coalition,

TRICOM, is a coalition that brings together the law enforcement, business and citizen communities. TRICOM is committed to health, safety and crime-prevention. Its Visions is: "One community focused upon a caring safety-conscious, health-driven and crime-free environment."

In order to make the communities of Winnebago County safe and crime-free, the Mission of TRICOM is to identify gaps in crime prevention services, conduct research on needs and programs to fill these gaps, be a networking hub and connector of resources that enhance the work of its partner organizations, and enhance community involvement opportunities in crime prevention and safe neighborhood programs.

For further information about TRICOM contact Chairman Dan Hinton at (920)236-4820 or (920)727-2882 ext. 4820.



Residents who believe that crime prevention is a good investment have a new option: The **Winnebago County Crime Prevention**

**Fund** is an endowment fund, established to provide lasting financial support for crime prevention activities throughout Winnebago County. The fund is an initiative of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and all law enforcement agencies throughout Winnebago County. For more information contact the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation at (920) 426-3993.

**Be a mentor to a child. You can make a difference!**

You can be a Best Friend and make the world better... one child at a time. Call Best Friends of Neenah-Menasha at (920)729-5600 for more information.



**TRIAD**

Don't Wait, Get Involved Soon...

TRIAD is a national program that unites police, sheriff and seniors to share experiences and prepare to

defend against frauds and scams or other senior issues. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life of older adults, through education and active participation in statewide programs and projects, by partnering with Law Enforcement, Senior Serving Agencies and Seniors to help reduce criminal victimization of older adults.

We are ALWAYS looking for new members to join us.

**Be Observant – Call About Crime!**



Please help law enforcement, if you see a crime in progress call the Winnebago County Emergency 911

**CALL 1-800-621-CASH (2274)**

[www.winnebagocrimestoppers.org](http://www.winnebagocrimestoppers.org)

center or you call the Winnebago County-Wide Crime Stoppers at 1-800-621-CASH (2274) or go to the website at [www.winnebagocountycrimestoppers.org](http://www.winnebagocountycrimestoppers.org) REMAIN ANONYMOUS! Cash rewards up to \$1000 if your information leads to the arrest or conviction of a criminal. Help protect your community and others, get involved to make Winnebago County a safer and more secure community.

## TWITTER SCAM INCIDENTS GROWING

Security experts are increasingly alarmed by the number of Twitter scam incidents showing up on the fast-growing “microblogging” site of the same name. Simply put, Twitter is an internet service where you register to get your own page where you post comments and messages up to 140 characters long.

**Here are 10 quick tips to help you avoid  
Twitters scams provided by  
scambusters.org:**

1. Be very careful signing up for work-from-home services connected with Twitter, and make sure you know exactly what you’re signing up for.
2. Don’t sign up for services that claim they’ll get you more followers.
3. Before entering your Twitter password on any sign-on-page, check that the address bar shows <http://twitter.com/>. Beware of anything that uses another word on either side of “twitter.”
4. Change your password frequently, and immediately if you think your account may have been compromised.
5. Be wary about clicking on links, even ones that appear to come from people you know. Get to know those you are newly following before trusting any of their links.
6. Make sure your internet security software is up to date so that if you do click on a bad link it will alert you if it takes you to a malware site.
7. Don’t automatically follow people who follow you. Visit your profile page and beware of anyone whose tweets consist mainly of links, or who appears to be following lots of people but has hardly posted any messages.
8. Never give away confidential information about yourself in a tweet, even if it all seems perfectly innocent.
9. Carefully check out programs that sign on to Twitter for you and fetch your messages. They can increase your security but they also need your password, so make sure they’re legit by doing a search first. Popular legit services include TweetDeck and Twhirl.
10. Simply don’t believe any message that says you won something. You didn’t.

Latest estimates suggest Twitter has at least 40 million subscribers and its one of the fastest growing social networking sites on the internet-and a correspondingly big source of social networking scams. If you’re one of those 40 million, or thinking of becoming one, have fun-but stay vigilant and watch out for that Twitter scam.

## **Be Educated, Be Involved, Take a Stance in your Neighborhood**

The key to safety in your neighborhood realistically is just being a good neighbor. Do you know the names/faces of those who live next door? Would you be suspicious if a moving truck pulled in next door and started loading up televisions and stereos? Does an adult in a car asking questions of a small child on the sidewalk strike you as odd? Have you ever answered the door to find someone selling meat or offering to do home improvements? These are all situations the police would find suspicious and we would prefer to investigate them while they are occurring instead of after someone becomes victimized. The police department needs all neighborhoods to have citizens who will take an interest in their neighborhoods and their neighbors. Neighborhood watch groups were started to break down barriers and unite people toward a common goal of safety near your home. Tricom, your citizen's crime prevention coalition, suggests wherever you live contact your local crime prevention officer to initiate a neighborhood watch in your neighborhood. We are not asking anyone to get personally involved in investigating suspicious activity. Rather, call the police when you see suspicious activity occurring. By joining forces we can make all of the communities in Winnebago County safer places to live.

For more information about Neighborhood Watch Programs:

In *Menasha*  
call 967-3500



In *Neenah*  
call 886-6000



In *Oshkosh*  
call 236-5742



In *Town of Menasha*  
call 720-7109



Elsewhere in *Winnebago County* call 236-7309



*Thank-you to the businesses that allow us to distribute The Crime Reporter and to TRIAD members and Crime Stoppers member Melanie Hunt for their help in preparing the newsletter.*