



While online gambling is booming, so too is the danger to teens

Special Interest Articles

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Some estimates place online gambling revenues at 9.2 billion dollars for 2004, with expectations of strong growth over the next few years. Most of that money comes from sports betting, but that could be overtaken by poker as early as 2008.

--www.itfacts.biz

Rolling the Dice on Internet Gambling

You can't flip on the TV without running into a handful of C-list celebs sweating in front of the camera playing poker for their favorite charity. Even as it is that in water-cooler conversation "The Flop" is no longer the stupendously bad Ben Affleck-Jennifer Lopez flick "Gigli" but the first three up cards in Texas Hold 'Em, gambling is booming nationwide. Slipstreaming behind the boom, Internet gambling is also doubling down.

But adults aren't the only ones placing bets. Armed with a credit card, Mom and Dad's or their own, teens are wagering on everything from sports events to your classic Vegas games of chance. While some studies say teen gambling overall is on the rise, there is very little doubt Internet gambling, much easier to hide and harder to monitor, poses an even greater threat.

The most obvious downside of this is the possibility of Junior using Mom's credit card to gamble away what was going to be his college tuition while still only in high school. There is also the small matter that minor gambling is illegal in every state. (Whether or not online gambling is illegal for everyone under U.S. law is a gray area roughly the size of Antigua and Barbuda, the small Caribbean country where a good chunk of online gaming sites make their home.) The websites themselves do little to verify the age of the user and have scant interest in doing anything that might stem the flow of cash.

Another danger is the addictive nature of gambling. Given that one of the key skills learned during adolescence is self-control, some studies show that youth are far more likely to have problems with gambling than adults. The instant gratification, the promise of material wealth, the adrenaline spike—it's an intoxicating cocktail for a web-surfing teen armed with a credit card. The unrelenting presence of the pop-up gambling ads on



Teens are very susceptible to

the seductive call of online gambling. the Web and the "fun" no money games the gambling sites use to entice youth merely sweeten the pot.

To counter the threat, Senator Charles Shumer of New York has suggested an ambitious plan. Senator Shumer's blueprint includes demanding that websites verify user's age, urging universities to block gambling websites on campus computers, and requiring the websites to post explicit warnings aimed at minors. But these are only the first steps.

Government action will no doubt help, but what can you do in the home as a parent? Watch for the warning signs of problem gambling and monitor your child's Internet use; otherwise, it's just a roll of the dice.

The Red Flags of Problem Gambling

- **Borrowing money from friends and family.**
- **Selling personal belongings.**
- **Unexplained debts or cash.**
- **Receiving phone calls from strangers.**
- **Mood or behavior changes.**
- **Online gambling sites charges on your credit card.**

**By Eric Fairbanks
Editor**

i-SAFE Rocks the Youth Summit for Online Safety

On June 3, i-SAFE is hosting the first-ever Youth Summit for Online Safety in San Diego, California. The Summit is a breakout event aimed at spreading the word of online safety. Partnering with Microsoft and Taking IT Global, i-SAFE is gathering 750 local high school students to tackle problems of cyber security and Internet safety. The students will be joining forces with tech experts, artists, industry professionals to brainstorm new ways of dealing with the five hottest topics in Cyberspace: Cyber Citizenship, Cyber Predators, Cyber Security, Privacy/Identity Theft, and Piracy/Intellectual Property. The students will convene at breakout sessions on the University of California at San Diego campus and create public service announcements, jingles, and skits promoting Internet safety. Look for complete coverage in next month's *i-SAFE Times*

New Jersey Takes the Lead on Fighting Cyber Bullying

Bullying has gone high-tech, with many of our new communication technologies now used by children to bully others. Cyber bullying can occur through community webpages, e-mail and instant messaging, cell phones and blogs as well as online polling sites. In some cases websites have been built specifically to mock and humiliate others. During 2004 i-SAFE's National Assessment Center surveyed 1,500 middle school students and found that 42% were bullied and 37% were threatened online.

New Jersey is taking the lead on the issue of bullying and "is the second state in the nation to design a statewide anti-bullying campaign" ("New Jersey Cares About Bullying," Office of the Attorney General, Office of Bias Crimes and Community Relations). As part of this ambitious campaign, the New Jersey Office of Bias Crimes and Community

Relations is hosting the "New Jersey Cares About Cyber-Bullying Conference" on May 17.

i-SAFE America will deliver a presentation on Cyber Safety Training and Curriculum at the conference. i-SAFE is confronting the issue of cyber bullying head on. We've added supplemental cyber bullying lesson plans to our curriculum as well as bullying content to our Professional Development Program. With growing evidence that "cyber bullying is worse than the regular schoolyard kind" (Mitchell, Alanna. "Bullied by the Click of a Mouse," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan. 24, 2004) there is more need than ever for Internet safety curriculum in the schools. For more information about how you can bring i-SAFE to your community please contact us at outreach@isafe.org.

**By James Deiter
i-SAFE Education**

i-STIK Tour Launched: North Dakota Safest State Online

Representative Earl Pomeroy (D-ND) joined i-SAFE at South Middle School in Grand Forks, ND, to launch a nationwide tour of i-STIK schools. South Middle is one of only ten schools across the country that have the digital credential token. The i-STIK allows only students with the token to participate in the i-STIK enabled chat room.

Congressman Pomeroy spoke during two i-SAFE Assembly Experiences and an i-STIK news conference. During each Assembly he showed the students an article from the *Grand Forks Herald*. It reported that only five days earlier a cyber predator had been caught in their own town, and Pomeroy stressed to the students that danger could be found online anywhere. Pomeroy told the students, "Even with the i-STIK you must still follow the golden rule of online behavior and never reveal your personal information."

After the Assembly Experiences, Congressman Pomeroy hosted a news conference to discuss the revolutionary device created by i-SAFE and VeriSign called the i-STIK. The news conference included six South Middle students demonstrating for the nation how the i-STIK works. Eighth grader Spencer was interviewed by Congressman Pomeroy



Congressman Pomeroy introduces the i-STIK to the students of South Middle School, North Dakota.

and he told everyone: "There's no hassle at all. It's easy to use and easy to carry around." He also said his friends like using it too because "We don't have to worry about older people being in the chat room."

i-SAFE looks to implement the innovative i-STIK program in more schools across the country this fall. So far, the i-STIK is being tested in North Dakota, Hawaii, Virginia, Montana, Florida, Oklahoma, Colorado, Nebraska, and Michigan. You can see more about the i-STIK and the Challenges students are working on at www.istik.org.

**By Kevin Storr
i-SAFE Communications**

News Flash!**i-SAFE and Dr. Phil**

The April 19 edition of the *Dr. Phil Show* awakened the nation to an emerging Internet threat—cyber bullying. A subject all too familiar to i-SAFE, students, and teachers, cyber bullying took center stage in front of a national television audience of millions. Surprise guest *American Idol* crooner Clay Aiken confessed to the undoubtedly astonished TV audience that he too had been bullied in school. i-SAFE's Kevin Storr was on hand to answer Dr. Phil's questions. Go here if you would like to see the [episode](#).

**We welcome your input!**

If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter or tell us your story, please contact us at:

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We're on the Web! See us at:

www.isafe.org

i-SAFE AMERICA

Educator's Corner: Hosting a PDP

We are pleased to offer our Online Event registration for your events. When scheduling your event, by submitting an Implementation Plan (IP), you may designate it *Invitation Only* or *Public*. It will appear on our *Calendar of Events*. If it is a closed session, attendees will need the event number to register online. If it is an open session, anyone may register. Registration remains open until midnight, the day following your event.

The system allows us to quickly add attendees to our database, enabling them immediate access to our program upon completion of the training session.

However, we need your help to make this work! As the facilitator, you may access the list of attendees and contact information for your PDP via a link for *Event Hosts* at the top of the *Calendar of Events*. The information is not available to others. And as the facilitator, you are responsible for notifying these people if there is a change in plans. Please ensure you keep them apprised of any and all changes! If you need assistance, please contact us at education@isafe.org.

About Our Organization...

MISSION: i-SAFE is a non-profit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower youth to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experience.

GOAL: The i-SAFE program provides students with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior and to respond appropriately.

i-SAFE is dedicated to: 1) implementing a standardized Internet safety education program throughout the nation that provides kids and teens with essential tools to reduce the risk of their being victimized while engaged in activities via the Internet; and 2) launching an Outreach Campaign that empowers students to take control of their online experiences and make educated, informed, and knowledgeable decisions as they actively engage in cyber activities.

A Special Thanks from The i-SAFE Times Staff

Kevin Storr, Editor-in-chief; Eric Fairbanks, Editor; Teri Schroeder, i-SAFE President; Jonathan King, Outreach Director; Carolyn Walpole, Education Director; Paul Olson, Graphic Design, and contributing writer: James Deiter.

i-SAFE Resources

Educators! If you are interested in bringing the i-SAFE Curriculum to your school, contact us at education@isafe.org or call us at (760) 603-7911.

Parents and Community Leaders! If you are interested in bringing the i-SAFE program to your community, contact us at outreach@isafe.org or call us at (760) 603-7911.

Students! If you are interested in becoming an i-SAFE Student Mentor, contact us at mentors@isafe.org or call us at (760) 603-7911.

Interested in attending an i-SAFE event? Click [here](#) for a full calendar of events coming to a location near you soon!