PERSONAL SAFETY

Online Chat Rooms & Social Networks

Many of us like to keep in touch with old friends and also find new friends with similar interests as us by using chat rooms and social networks. Some of the people you contact through these websites are honest and are just looking for new people to interact with. However, there is also a great deal of people who are predators, utilizing these networks to manipulate innocent, trusting people. These predators attempt to gain your trust then use it to their advantage to commit crimes against you (for example: **sexual assault/rape, theft, identity fraud, burglary**, etc). ANYONE can be a victim. Predators will often target someone they feel is vulnerable (Ex: Someone new to an area or a foreign exchange student). Please remember even though you have been using a certain site and you have never had issues in the past (ex: Facebook, Google Plus, talkcity.com, conversationexchange.com, ICQ.com), do not assume everyone is being honest and forth coming with you.

How to keep yourself safe:

- **Don't believe everything you read online, especially from someone in a chat room.** It's extremely easy to lie online and predators will tell you anything to gain your trust. For example the "22-year-old college football star" you just met online might actually be a 40-year-old man trying to gain your trust.

- **Predators hoping to build a relationship will look for clues on what you like, who you are and where you live.** Don't give out this information because it can be used to find you. Never reveal your name, address, phone number or other personal information to someone you meet online.

- **Choose a random user name or screen name.** Make sure it doesn't reveal your name, location or interests. For example, the user name "CutieCougar94" might reveal to a predator that this person is likely female, a student at a school with a Cougar mascot and born in 1994.

- **Don't respond to messages that in any way make you feel uncomfortable.** Even if you have been chatting with someone for several weeks and they begin to say things to you that make you uncomfortable, do not feel that you have to be polite and continue to chat with them. You can always find another chat room or 'un-friend' them.

- **Don't try to meet someone in person that you met online by yourself.** Make sure it is in a public place and bring a few friends. Never, ever go alone.

The San Diego Community College District Police Department's mission is to maintain peace and order and a safe learning environment throughout our District. There are Emergency Call-Boxes in many classrooms, elevators and parking lots that provide a direct link to the San Diego Community College District Police Department.
If you have information about crimes which have occurred, or may occur on or near campus, you may report it by calling College Police at (619) 388-6405, the San Diego Police at (619) 531-2000 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-TIPS. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Charles Hogquist
Chief of Police