



Home | Search Site

Who We Are

Attorney General
Tom Miller
Office Directory

What We Do

Protecting Consumers
Fighting Crime
Helping Victims of
Crime
Working for Farmers
Protecting the
Environment
Raising Child Support
Awareness
Representing State
Government
Issuing Attorney
General Opinions
Enforcing Tobacco Laws
Protecting Utility
Customers

Resources

File a Consumer
Complaint
Other Complaint
Resources
News Releases &
Publications
Legal Resources
Jobs & Internships
Contact Us

Consumer Advisory Bulletin

Protect Kids' Privacy Online

Web sites must obtain parents' permission before collecting personal information from children under age 13.

Kids are more and more adept at "surfing" the Internet these days -- to study, play, send e-mail, and shop. But some web sites collect personal information from kids, such as their name, home address, e-mail address, or even hobbies. Then, some web sites use that personal information - they send solicitations, for example, or even sell the information to advertisers. All this raises serious concerns about our children's privacy.

The good news for parents and kids is that web site operators now must follow rules that protect the privacy of children under 13. The rules go a long way toward putting parents back in charge of who collects personal information from their kids, how the information is used, and whether information is shared with third parties. The rules were issued by the Federal Trade Commission under the "Children's Online Privacy Protection Act."

Here are tips for parents, based on the new Children's Privacy Protection Act rules:

- Teach your kids about online privacy. Tell them not to give out their user ID or password, and not to give your family name, address or phone number in chat rooms, on bulletin boards, or to on-line pen-pals. Help kids read the privacy policy at web sites, and explain that sites may try to capture their personal information.
- Study the privacy policy of any web site directed to your children. Such sites must make the privacy policy available at their home page and wherever they collect information from kids. (Children's sections of "general audience" sites also must post their privacy policy.) Study what information is collected, how it will be used, and whether it will be passed on to advertisers or other third parties.
- Decide whether to give parental consent. In most cases, a site now must obtain parental consent before it collects, uses, or discloses personal information about a child under age 13. Note that parents may give consent but still say no to having information passed on to third parties. Sites must request consent again if they plan to use the information in a new way. Parents also may revoke consent at any time.
- Ask to see personal information collected from your kids. (You will have to verify your identity.) Parents have a right to delete information collected from kids.

The FTC has even more detailed information - for parents, kids and businesses - at the [FTC web site](#). You may also contact the Iowa Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, Hoover Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Call 515-281-5926.

[Return to Consumer Advisories](#)