

# Social Networking 101

## What are social networks?

Online communities where people keep in touch with existing friends, or meet new online friends.

**What do kids do there?** Create online profiles, chat with other members, share pictures or videos, take quizzes, write blogs, and more.

### Examples:

Popular social networking sites include MySpace, Facebook, Xanga, and Bebo. Some sites for younger children, such as Webkinz or Neopets, also include social networking components.

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# How do kids connect to the Internet?

## Access is Everywhere!

**Computers.** At home, friends' houses, school, the local library, coffeehouses, and other wireless hot spots.

**Cell phones.** Most cell phones allow users to access the web, chat, and share pictures or video.

**Video games.** Some gaming consoles allow kids to compete against and chat with other players online.

*Kids who want to go online will find a way to get there. Make sure you talk to your children about Internet safety!*

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# Social Networking: Tips for Parents

**Utilize privacy settings.** Only allow people you trust in real life to access your child's social networking circle.

**Monitor your child's online profile.** Make sure your child is not revealing *any* identifying information in a public forum.

**Be reasonable.** Social networking is here to stay. Restricting access entirely may cause your child to rebel or create accounts behind your back. Instead, make it something you do together. Consider getting an account yourself and becoming part of your child's social circle!

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# What is Cyberbullying?

## When a child uses the Internet to...

- Send **harassing** or **threatening** messages
- Post digitally altered or **embarrassing** pictures of someone else
- Spread **rumors** and **lies** about someone else
- Create web sites that **ridicule** others
- **Hack** another user's profile or pretend to be someone they are not

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# How to deal with cyberbullies...

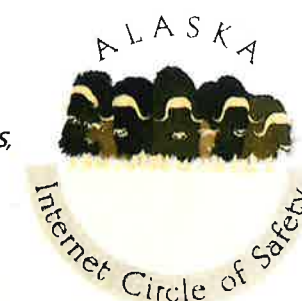
## There are many options:

**Ignore the bully.** Delete messages and block the bully from your inbox, buddy lists, and social networking circle.

**Report the bully.** Who you contact varies with each situation. Possible places to report cyberbullying include parents, Internet service providers, web site administrators, school officials, or local law enforcement.

**Protect yourself.** Children should *never* share their passwords with anyone but their parents or guardians.

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