

Monthly Columns

by Attorney General Jack Conway



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As Kentucky kids return to school, I want to encourage parents to take a few minutes to talk with their children about the dangers that exist on the Internet and how to stay safe online. With the proliferation of smart phones, webcams and the Internet, kids today are at a greater risk of being sexually exploited or even targeted by online predators.

According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, one in seven kids is solicited for sex online and one in 33 kids receive aggressive online solicitations to meet in person.

As a father and as Attorney General, I am alarmed by these statistics. Make sure your kids know to never meet an online friend in person unless you are with them. As a condition of use, make your children list you as a friend on their favorite social-networking sites. These are some simple steps you can take at home to keep your kids safe online.

I'd also like to share with you all that my office is doing to make the Internet a safer place for Kentucky kids. After I became Attorney General in 2008, I streamlined priority operations within my office and created a Cybercrimes Unit dedicated to investigating crimes that occur online, and particularly crimes that target children.

In three years, my Cybercrimes investigators have launched more than 230 child pornography investigations and seized nearly 283,000 child pornographic images and videos from the Internet. Our efforts have resulted in the arrests of dozens of suspects, including the arrest of a retired Florida school teacher who is accused of traveling to Kentucky to have sexual relations with someone he believed to be a child he met online.

I am proud of all that my Cybercrimes Unit, now a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, has accomplished over the past three years.

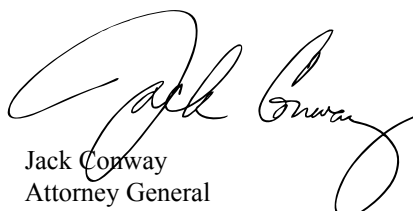
- Launched 232 child pornography investigations

- Seized more than 283,000 child pornographic images and videos from the Internet
- Made more than 40 arrests
- Executed nearly 120 search warrants
- One of nine agencies in the country selected by Microsoft to host cybersafety training for investigators
- Trained nearly 3,000 law enforcement officers and prosecutors on the latest technologies in fighting cybercrimes and data collection

Through the creation of a digital forensics lab, we are also addressing the backlog of digital evidence in Kentucky. To date, my lab has processed more than 4,000 hard drives and removable devices for more than 100 law enforcement agencies. This is allowing law enforcement and prosecutors across Kentucky to receive more quickly crucial digital evidence that is involved in 80 percent of crimes today. In some cases, it used to take months to have evidence processed and we're turning around hard drives in about a week.

Along with our investigative efforts, I have spoken to more than 40,000 parents, children and teachers about the importance of staying safe online. I have also partnered with the Kentucky Department of Education and ConnectKentucky to create the CybersafeKY program and won passage of comprehensive Cybercrimes legislation to better protect Kentucky children from online dangers.

For more information on Cybersafety, please visit <http://ag.ky.gov/cybersafety>. Working together, we are making Kentucky a safer place to live, work and raise a family.



Jack Conway
Attorney General