

Did You Know . . .

By Chief Matthew Workman
Vernonia Police Department



When I was in high school in the 80's, there were limited means of communication between me

and my friends. It was either in person, letters, notes passed in school, or phone calls (no cell phones). All of these methods were fairly personal and involved only me and my friends. Today, we have almost limitless methods of communication, many of which are hard to understand or not used by the technologically challenged, like me. There is email, text messaging, chat rooms, blogs (on-

line journals), instant messaging, web pages, and many other ways that we and our children use to communicate with family, friends, and even strangers.

Even though we don't understand a communication medium does not mean we should ignore it. It is imperative that parents and guardians know that your children are using these mediums to talk not

only to their friends, but also to communicate with people they don't know. Most of the time there is no harm done but, unfortunately, today's society is full of sexual predators and people who prey on others. Predators regularly use websites like Yahoo Chat, myspace.com, MSN, and other services to find their victims.

Ask to see your children's web pages or their myspace.

com pages; you might be surprised by what you find and how much information your children are providing strangers. For internet safety tips and a parent's guide you can follow the "Internet Safety" link on the VPD website. There is also a list of "chat" abbreviations and some Internet definitions you should know.

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