



A FAMILY SAFETY UPDATE

from

**Assemblyman
WILL BARCLAY**

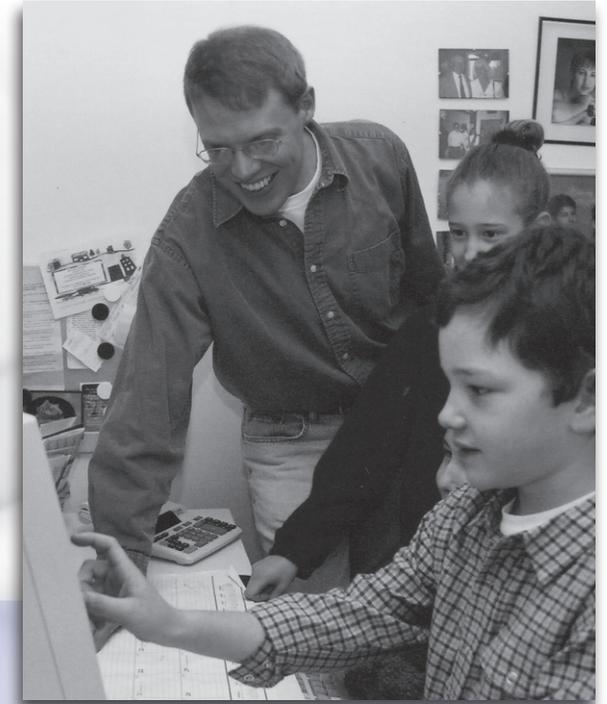
Keeping Our Kids Safe on the Internet

The Internet has transformed our lives – but these changes haven't always been positive. It can be a place where predators tend to lurk, using their tech savvy to blend into forums, Internet ads and games where they can prey on unassuming adults and children alike. Internet gaming is an increasingly popular pastime for our young people, with 97 percent of teens playing online games and 27 percent of them doing so with unknown persons, according to a recent Pew Research Center study.

Recently, over 3,500 online accounts of registered sex offenders in New York were banned from online video game venues as part of "Operation: Game Over." This coincides with recent incidents of sexual predators using voice- and text-chat functions in online-gaming services to lure underage victims across the country.

While our laws are designed to protect children, sometimes that just isn't enough. Parents should be aware of sexual predators and take some of the following steps to safeguard against potential online predators:

- **Talk to your kids about safe Internet use. Develop reasonable rules and explain their importance.**
- **Supervise their online activities. Keep aware of websites visited and games played.**
- **Encourage your kids' critical thinking skills. Talk to them about how to protect important information and to avoid or report conversations that make them uncomfortable.**
- **Choose games appropriate for your child's age and maturity level.**
- **Exercise parental controls, be it whether or not they can play online or installing rating, blocking and filtering applications and websites on your computer.**
- **Keep your computer or game console in a public area of the home.**



If you or your child feels threatened by an online predator, you can report the situation to your local authorities or contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-888-NETS411 or visit the netsmartz website. By exercising caution, maintaining a dialogue with our kids and staying vigilant, we can ensure that our children remain safe from sex offenders and online predators.



WILL BARCLAY

200 North Second St., Fulton, NY 13069
315-598-5185

Find me on Facebook!
[tinyurl.com/WillBarclayFB](https://www.facebook.com/tinyurl.com/WillBarclayFB)

Or sign up for my e-newsletter:
barclaw@assembly.state.ny.us