

Webmaster Guidelines for Parents/Families -----

Family - Web sites are becoming easier to launch than ever before!

However, that also means that the information not only in them, but also about them, is becoming just as easy to be obtained. Don't be a random, or not so random, victim of Domain Discovery.

- **Protect your site.**

Family sites in particular should be set up to prompt the user for a username and password immediately. The security would ideally take place by implementing it through the Web server first, and then alternately through the actual Web site coded language. Asking your Web host about security options and exploring their willingness to explain and assist you on this matter should be an important factor in the decision to use the hosting service.

- **Protect your image.**

If it is your desire to have public facing pages (those not secured by log-in process) you need to ensure that you are not openly handing users information that can be used to identify or locate you. These pages should not have pictures of family members, e-mail addresses, or street addresses present anywhere in the header, content, or footer.

- **Protect your information.**

Your family is not world news. Too much revealing information can easily be assembled by reading through a little as one news article posted on a family Web site. All news should be secure and never appear on a public page - especially the site homepage. Alternately, parents could create a simple link to the protected area that is accompanied by the date the news was last updated.

- **Protect your community.**

It is easy to inadvertently mention that a certain church, community center, or regional park is conveniently located in your area. Again, if having public pages are desired, these pages should omit all references to these types of physical references. This does not exclude the occasional mentions of a softball league or classic car cruising night. Additionally, public pages should not link to these same references as they are more than often going to contain enough information about your town.

- **Protect your anonymity.**

When buying a domain name you can either purchase it as a company or individual. If you can be personally tied to either one, register the domain name as you would but pay the additional fee (often about \$5.00) for "whois privacy". A whois search on unprotected domain names instantly reveals the required information needed by the registrar purchase the domain name. This information includes a full name, current address (verified by credit card), and telephone/fax. A minimal annual investment goes along way to preserving your anonymity.

- **Consider your options.**

With a growing number of households purchasing dedicated Internet access and/or purchasing some other online service, providers are offering more services to be competitive. One of these services includes providing free (but limited) Web hosting services with the purchase of Internet access. When purchasing online services for your home/office, inquire about the availability of these services and the technology behind them. As mentioned earlier, one important feature to expect is the capability to password protect any portion of your hosting service. Looking into the ISP provider, although often restricted in hard drive storage space, database functionality, and server-side scripting languages is more difficult to resolve than a stand-alone domain. It can also place many aspects of security on the provider.

- **Keep yourself informed.**

Periodically use popular search engine to conduct searches on your family member's names individually and in combination with local events and community landmarks like high schools. Make sure that your family members are not being posted on other sites unless you are fully aware of it.

- **Protect your code.**

Using a combination of <meta> tags and a simple robots.txt file can help to reduce and even prevent search engine spiders and spambots from spidering your site. Some examples are provide below:

Save file to the root of your Web site directory:

robots.txt

```
# For use by yourdomain.com
# Created by Firstname Lastname on 08/15/2006 15:37:05 CST
User-agent: *
Disallow: /
```

Save on every Web page in your site between the <head></head> tags:

```
<meta name="robots" content="noindex,nofollow" />
<meta content="no-cache" http-equiv="Pragma" />
<meta http-equiv="expires" content="999" />
```

A public family/individual blog on the Internet is no different from standing on your front porch and yelling your personal day-to-day happenings to the neighbors (only multiplied by a 100 million or so).