

Marks Remarks by Mark Rowen Lincoln County Educator 2-13-08

With the weather keeping most of us inside, I believe cabin fever has set in. There are few things the children can do except watch TV, play video games, or be on the computer. What sites have your children visited in the last week? Maybe as a parent it is time to take a look at the history of the web browser to find out. As all of us have seen on the news reports, there are predators out there looking for young children and they look on the web. It becomes important for parents to know the chat rooms and other sites visited on-line. Some of the internet providers keep a log of the visited sites. They may show the sites as the last used or keep them on record for a number of days.

Not only do parents want to know about the sites visited on the PC at home. What about the wireless phone? Some of the new technology can access the net and has a full keyboard to do so. If children are accessing the web from the wireless devices, this should be showing up on the bill from the provider. Should all the charges come as a single bill, ask the provider to list those charges for each of the lines or devices for the family. This will show the times and possibly the sites visited by each device.

There is software available from companies that will limit access to inappropriate sites for children. This can be purchased and installed on the PC but what about the wireless devices. There is an organization that is concerned about children accessing sites from wireless devices. This organization can be found at www.wiredsafety.org This organization can help parents limit access to inappropriate sites from wireless phones and other devices.

Text messages and photos are also used by children today. My Space and Facebook are public/social access sites. These are sources for contact with an element of society that can and does exploit children. Taking the time to monitor and check on your children, will not make you popular, but will allow you some peace of mind.

For more information about these and other topics contact the Extension office at 764-2756.