








## Tips to Prevent Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking presents potential danger to everyone, but females represent the majority of online victims. Harrassers look for information that suggests that you are vulnerable. So:

-  Choose gender-neutral e-mail addresses. Keep your primary e-mail address private— only give it to people that you know and trust. (Get a free e-mail account and use that one for all of your other on-line activity.)
-  Know your options and preferences for e-mail, chat rooms, and instant messaging services. Block or ignore users who bother you and won't go away. You can also take advantage of features such as "block all users except those on my buddy list" or put unwanted users on "ignore" .
-  Select gender-neutral user names on sites that ask you to create a user name. If possible make it completely different than the one you selected for your e-mail address.
-  Don't fill out on-line profiles, or give as little of your personal information as possible when signing onto web pages. Teach children to never give out their personal information (name, address, phone, school, etc.) over the internet without your permission.
-  Before posting messages (in chat rooms, on message boards, blogs, newsgroups, and other public sites) lurk there. If the conversations make you uncomfortable don't post. Make it a practice never to react or defend yourself in these sites. A harasser is fishing for someone to latch on to and harass, so don't take the bait.
-  Exercise caution when posting pictures of yourself or your children anywhere on-line. Ask family and friends to do the same. Prohibit schools, athletic programs, dance academies, etc from publishing photos of your children. (A random, non-descript e-mail address or user name is much less noticeable to obsessive personality types who can become obsessed with an image.)
-  Try ego surfing—enter your first and last name in quotes on a search engine like Google to see if there are any results containing your information.

Board of County Commissioner goals are to reduce property crime, violent crime and overall crime by 2015 . These tips are intended to increase your awareness and help avoid crime. If you have a proven prevention or awareness tip that can be shared, please fax it to 276-2630 for consideration and possible distribution.