



**Crimestoppers Presents Cyber Safety Forum**  
***Forum will help teach safety from predators and scammers***

(Robinson, IL) -- Crawford County Crimetoppers is putting on a Cyber Safety Forum at the Robinson Community Center on September 10 at 7:00 PM. The forum will focus on keeping kids safe on the Internet and keeping people safe from scammers and phishing schemes.

"We want to help make sure people know some of the ways to stay safe online," said Crimestoppers president Chris Forde. "Predators and scammers lurk in the Internet waiting to take advantage of people. We want people to know how to beat them."

Crimestoppers is enlisting the help of two police officers for the forum. Officer Bryon Danks has had special training from the Illinois Attorney General's Office dealing with how to keep kids safe from sexual predators online. Officer Ken Pryor works with the FBI's Cybercrimes Task Force and is knowledgeable on online scams and phishing schemes.

Danks says it is important for parents to keep an eye on what their kids are doing online. "Internet safety is a big thing because the Internet is not a vast sea of anonymity like a lot of people, especially kids, think it is. There's a lot of predators out there that prey on kids because of their vulnerability online."

He says one of the things parents can run into is that the kids often know more about how computers and the Internet work. He says that's why it is important to monitor what your kids are doing online.

"A good place to start is not letting them have a computer in their room that's online unless you have a really close way of monitoring them. There's also some really good software that's available. If you talk to a local computer tech about that, he can set you up with some good filtering programs that can block out websites either by URL or by the content of websites. It can also give you some ways to track where they've been and things like that."

Danks says the forum will give parents valuable advice on how to keep their kids safe.

"I think it's extremely important. Not that we know everything about what's going on either and how things work, but we do know what types of people are out there, what kind of crimes they're doing, how they're utilizing the Internet to prey on kids and we can give you some good advice and at least steer you in the right direction of who else you can get a hold of to make sure your kids are safe."

Pryor says there's hardly a day that goes by where he doesn't get some sort of an email that's trying to get personal information.

"It's growing exponentially. It's just getting worse and worse every day. I've taken a number of complaints over the last few years and it seems like they're becoming more and more frequent. Its just a situation where people are losing their vital information to the wrong people and then that information gets sold to other bad people and it just spreads around."

Pryor says you should never click on a link in an email and you should never give out your personal information to an unsolicited email. He also says it's important to do things like shredding junk mail.

Pryor says the forum will help give you a leg up on the scammers out there.

"I think there's a lot to be gained by coming to it. The biggest reason, really, is to just find out what's going on and how you can protect yourself. The methods criminals use for phishing and identity theft are changing all the time. They find new ways to get around what you put up as your security and the best thing you can do is come and find out the latest."

There forum is free and the officers will be able to answer some of the questions you might have about Internet safety.