

Be Comfortable Online!

At age-appropriate levels, CyberSmart!® lessons teach children to safely manage their online experiences.



Jan, a fifth grader, likes to visit Web sites about her favorite actress. Her friend tells her about a site with fun photos of the actress making her latest film. After school, Jan types the Web address she thinks is correct. Instead of finding photos of the star on a movie set, she finds pictures that shock and upset her.

Jan is embarrassed by the photos. She realizes she must have entered the wrong site address (or URL). She is afraid she will get in trouble with her parents. Scared, Jan stays away from cyberspace for a few days.



Marcos likes going into cyberspace to talk to his school buddies. Lately, one of his buddies is using rude language in his messages. Marcos is uncomfortable with such language. He is afraid his parents will see the words on his computer screen and get angry. Then they might take away his messaging privileges. Marcos' buddy doesn't use these words in school or at the park.

Think about it...

- Why do you think his buddy acts differently in cyberspace?
- What do you think Marcos should do about the problem?
- What words in this story tell that Jan feels uncomfortable?
- What advice would you give Jan?

Choose one story. Write a Dear Abby type letter to Jan or Marcos giving your advice for how best to handle situations like these.



It's NOT your fault.

It's fun to explore Web sites and search for information. However, sometimes you may find things you don't want to see. It's easy to stumble across icky or embarrassing sites by mistake. In fact, some sites have tricky addresses on purpose. So, you might tell Jan, "It's not your fault."

Some PEOPLE CHANGE when they go into cyberspace.

Marcos' friend has good manners face to face, but uses rude words in cyberspace. Some people think it's okay to say things in cyberspace that they'd never say to someone face to face. Why? Maybe they think they can't get in trouble in cyberspace. Maybe they think it makes them seem cool. Or, maybe, when they're behind a computer screen they just forget they're talking to a real person.

Take ACTION!

When you get that uncomfortable feeling at a Web site, get out of there. Click the back button on your browser. If you feel upset, you should tell your parent, guardian, or teacher what happened.

Take ACTION!

If someone on the street makes you uncomfortable, you know to walk away and tell a grownup. The same rule works in cyberspace. Ignore them, block them, or get offline. Tell your parents or teacher.

