

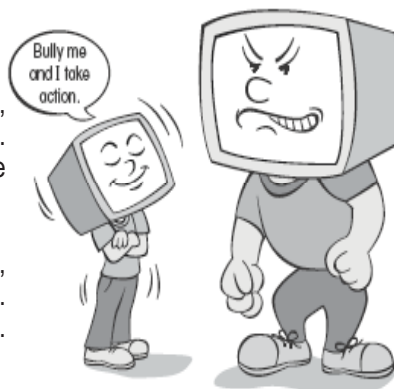
Dealing with Online Bullies

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

What would you do?

For the tenth day in a row, **Andrew** opens an E-mail that says, "I'm getting closer." He doesn't recognize the sender's address. He wonders if someone at school is trying to scare him. On the other hand, it could be a stranger.

Whatever the source, Andrew is scared. The next afternoon, Andrew is home alone. The E-mails come every few minutes. "I'm hiding in your house using a wireless Internet connection. You'll never find me. But I'll find you."



Frozen with fear, Andrew can't think what to do. If he called you for advice, what would you tell him?

Sondra is planning a slumber party to celebrate her birthday. Her parents have set a limit of eight girls, so Sondra can't invite everyone she'd like. Two girls who are left out overhear the plans. Angry, they plan their revenge.

The girls make a "We Hate Sondra Jones" group on a social networking site. They say that anyone invited to the party should not go. They tell everyone in school the group's address. The girls invite everyone to add new reasons why they hate Sondra and to spread ugly rumors about her.

When Sondra hears about the group address, she gets a sick feeling in her stomach. Unable to ignore it, she checks the site often. Each day she finds a new nasty comment or joke about her. She feels hurt and powerless to defend herself. Sondra is too embarrassed to go to school and tells her parents she is sick.

Take Action!

Bullying should not be tolerated, whether in school or in cyberspace. Trust your uncomfortable feelings—they mean something is wrong.

Here is what to do about it.

- Sign off the computer.
- Leave the chat room or Web site.
- Block the bully's messages.
- Save and print the bully's E-mails or your message logs.
- Never reply to a bully.
- Talk over how to handle the situation with a friend.
- Report your experience to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult.

Both Sondra and Andrew are the targets of online bullies. Whether bullies are face to face or in cyberspace, they feel powerful when they bother other people.

Be CyberSmart!®

If you feel at risk because someone has your private identity information, tell your parents or a trusted adult right away.

they bother other people. They may use hurtful words or threaten. Online or off, bullying is meant to make you feel uncomfortable. Usually, online bullying does not cross over into real life, but it can. Either way, it's upsetting.

Write a letter to the Editor giving your opinion of bullying.



A Newspaper in
Education
Special Feature

www.arkansaspress.org

For more free standards-based CyberSmart! lessons, web tools and professional development fostering the acquisition of 21st Century skills for educators go to: www.cybersmart.org.