

# Education is the key to online safety

## Information sent electronically can end up anywhere and helping people protect themselves from the harm this might cause has become part of the AFP's job.

Today's computer technology may have opened up a new way of communicating but this has created pitfalls for consumers and new challenges for law enforcement.

The AFP High Tech Crime Operations Crime Prevention Team is developing and implementing online education and awareness raising strategies to help protect the community from technology-enabled crime.

Coordinator Crime Prevention Jenny Cartwright says educating users can be a powerful tool for preventing crimes.

"Our focus is to empower individuals with knowledge so they can take responsibility for protecting themselves while online," Dr Cartwright said.

"We do this through a range of education initiatives aimed at different age groups, from young children through to seniors."

The ThinkUKnow program, a joint initiative of the AFP and Microsoft Australia, plays a key role in educating the community in what to do when confronted by some of the online risks. Created by the United Kingdom's Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre, ThinkUKnow is an internet safety program delivering interactive training to parents, carers and teachers through primary and secondary schools.

Following a successful pilot in the ACT, NSW and Victoria earlier in the year, the program will be rolling out nationally in 2010.

ThinkUKnow Australia focuses on raising awareness among parents, carers and teachers on how kids have fun online, how they can stay in control and how to report when things go wrong. ThinkUKnow aims to demystify the technology and open up the lines of communication between adults and young people on technology-related issues.

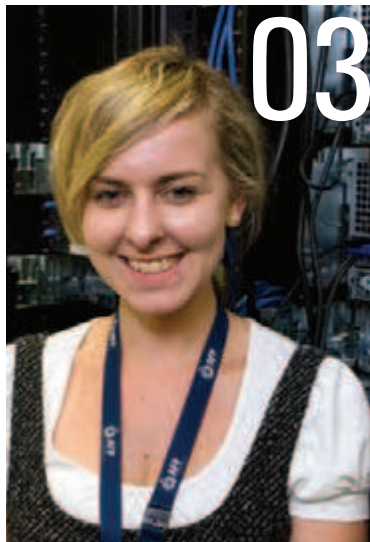
The principle behind ThinkUKnow, giving parents, children and other members of the community the tools they need to recognise the risks and know how to overcome them, is key to its success, Dr Cartwright said. And the program has met a need.

"Some of the schools that have had a ThinkUKnow presentation this year are seeking to book another presentation next year," Dr Cartwright said.

National Manager High Tech Crime Operations Neil Gaughan said ThinkUKnow helps parents, carers and teachers encourage children to think before they act online.

"By helping to start a dialogue between parents and children, we hope that young people will be more confident going to their parents when they have a problem, and that their parents will better understand how to deal with online issues," Commander Gaughan said.

"The AFP will continue to work closely with industry, government and local and international law enforcement agencies to protect





01: Commander Neil Gaughan 02: Dr Jenny Cartwright 03: Crime Prevention Team member Melissa Sevil 04: Federal Agent Jayne Crossling speaking about internet safety during a visit to Kalgoorlie.

children online through education and by targeting online sex offenders.”

The youth education program is designed to make young people think of the possible consequences of the things they do online. For example, many teenagers don’t realise that once something is published on the internet it can never be permanently deleted and may cause problems for them in the future.

The program also makes young people aware of the need to protect their image and reputation by being careful of who they communicate with, and how they communicate.

It’s not only the young who are vulnerable online. The AFP, in collaboration with the Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association, also runs information sessions on internet security

for seniors. AFP members have visited clubs and retirement villages in Queensland and NSW and delivered presentations on the risks and on how seniors can protect themselves online. They also provide printed information to remind seniors how to avoid the most common problems encountered online.

Internet safety encompasses many areas. Online financial fraud, child exploitation material, malicious software, viruses and identity theft are just some of the issues that the High Tech Crime teams deal with every day.

To help mitigate and prevent online crime, the AFP partners with other industry groups such as the Australian Bankers’ Association and the Association of Building Societies and Credit Unions. The

AFP Joint Banking Finance Sector Investigation Teams in Sydney and Melbourne, which include investigators on secondment from the major banks, conduct investigations into internet banking fraud. But community education remains one of the most important tools in online crime prevention.

“Law enforcement has a role to play, but the community must also take responsibility when it comes to using the internet safely,” Dr Cartwright said.

“The AFP has a commitment to preventing online crime, and education is an important part of that commitment.

“It is a real pleasure for us to give people of all ages the tools to protect themselves so they can use the internet safely.”

