

Online Language Keeps Parents Guessing

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[Parents' Guide To Computer Slang](#)



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(CBS4) BOSTON It's called Leetspeak - the online language kids use to speed up communication and keep their parents guessing. The code has developed a dangerous edge to it.

Thirteen-year-old Michael Kennedy says BFF means "best friends forever" in an instant message from a friend. It's how kids communicate online, and it can be fairly innocent. OMG, for example, is "oh my gosh."

But Leetspeak, the secret code of numbers and letters, is changing and Internet safety experts want to warn parents about it.

"There are too many predators out there that could endanger their kids' lives or sexualize them too early," says Internet safety expert and family therapist Barbara Melton. "And leetspeak is just a gateway to all that."

How bad has the lingo become? NIFOC is one of the terms they will use and it means Naked in Front of Computer. Then there's KPC - Keeping Parents Clueless; GYP0 - Get Your Pants Off; and TDTM - Talks Dirty To Me.

While some parents are clued into the code, experts say most are not.

One young girl started a steamy online affair right in front of her parents says family therapist Susan Shankle, "While the mom was cooking dinner and the dad was watching television, the daughter who was 11 at the time was carrying on this conversation with an older man."

Although the parents checked the instant message regularly, the conversations were like a foreign language.

Al Kush of Wiredsafety.org has this advice for parents about Leetspeak, "At least become familiar with it. Know it's there.

Parental control software is helpful, but it's not a panacea. It's not the answer." Fortunately, there are several on-line dictionaries and translators that can help parents BTC...Break Their Code. They include Teenangels.org and Netlingo.com.

One of the most commonly used abbreviations is POS which means Parent Over Shoulder. Your kids may not like it, but experts say that's exactly where you should be if you want to help keep your child safe.

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