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**SURVEY SHOWS CYBER ACTIVITY STARTING AT YOUNGER AGES; INCREASINGLY INCLUDES RISKY BEHAVIOR**

***Attorney General Madigan Convenes First Ever Cyber Summit; Launches Cyberbullying Web site to Educate Children, Parents and Teachers***

Chicago —Illinois children as young as eight-years-old are texting and using cell phones with cameras, while kids as young as 12 are setting up social media sites. This snapshot of cyber habits comes from a survey conducted by Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office of more than 4,200 Illinois school children.

The survey results demonstrate that children and teens are actively using the Internet and cell phone technology in ways that lead to risks and potential dangers. Of teens surveyed (ages 14 years and up), more than 27 percent said they have been threatened by someone online and nearly 30 percent have felt uncomfortable with a conversation they have had on the Internet. In that same 14 plus age group, almost 41 percent said they have received an inappropriate picture of someone online, and more than 43 percent indicated they have said something inappropriate to someone online. According to the survey, nearly 90 percent of the teens 14 years and older have cameras on their cell phones and can send text messages.

Madigan released the results of the survey today during the Attorney General's first ever Cyber Safety Summit, bringing together state and local law enforcement officials, school officials, and technology industry experts to discuss youth cyber safety and identify strategies to combat the dangers that come with children and teen's widespread access to online and mobile technologies.

"Our survey confirms the fact that our children are increasingly using cell phones and the Internet to text, e-mail photos, and reveal personal information through social networking sites," said Madigan.

"Through our years of work investigating Internet predators, we know that by using technology, children can unintentionally place themselves at risk of danger," said Madigan. "With today's first-ever Cyber Safety Summit, we are bringing together law enforcement, school leaders and technology experts to analyze the tools and strategies we need to better protect our children from the very real dangers that are out there in cyberspace."

Throughout the year, Attorney General Madigan's office conducts Internet safety presentations for school children, teachers and parents. During Internet safety presentations in September and October, Madigan's office surveyed students in grades three through 12 at elementary, junior high and high schools. The survey was designed to learn how children from eight to 18 are using cell phones and Internet technology. The complete survey results are available on the Attorney General's Web site at [www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov).

Through their Internet safety and High Tech Crimes work, Madigan's office has learned that one of the problems that children increasingly face online is cyberbullying and online harassment. Cyberbullying occurs when someone is harassed, humiliated or threatened by another person using the Internet or a mobile device. With the rise of social networking sites, like Facebook and MySpace, along with instant messaging and cell phone access, today's school bullies can spread hurtful or humiliating messages to large numbers of people in a short amount of time.

In response to this disturbing new trend, the Attorney General today introduced a new Web site developed to help children, teens, parents and educators learn about the dangers of Cyberbullying. The "Stop Cyberbullying" Web site ([www.ebully411.com](http://www.ebully411.com)) includes the latest news and statistics, frequently asked questions and a quiz to test online users' knowledge about cyberbullying. It also features an E-Info Hotline, which is a phone- and Web-based resource staffed by the Attorney General's Internet safety specialists, who can help victims and teach bullies to understand the impact of their actions. More information is available by calling the Hotline at 1-888-414-7678 or by e-mailing [e-info@atg.state.il.us](mailto:e-info@atg.state.il.us).

"Working with parents, teachers and law enforcement, I want to ensure that Illinois children are safe from all the possible dangers posed by the Internet and mobile technology," said Madigan. "Our goal is to empower children and teens so that they have the ability to protect themselves in today's high-tech world and to provide tools to parents and teachers."

These new cyber initiatives are just the latest in Attorney General Madigan's ongoing efforts to make the Internet a safer place for children.

Through her High Tech Crimes Bureau, the Attorney General oversees the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force with a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The Illinois ICAC task force is one of 62 similar organizations nationwide designed to investigate child exploitation crimes and provide Internet safety education and training programs. Through August 2009, the Illinois ICAC task force provided Internet safety training and education to more than 92,690 parents and students and 8,305 law enforcement officers and prosecutors. For more information about the Attorney General's efforts to promote online safety, visit <http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/communities/index.html>.

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