

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Online teens respond to adult advice for reducing risk**

A recent study conducted at the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Research Institute has proved shocking and sobering for millions of concerned parents—although it does offer a glimmer of hope.

After reviewing 500 profiles of 18-year-old MySpace members, researchers found that a majority of teenagers who regularly use the unregulated social networking site weren't just chatting with their buddies or playing innocuous games. More than 50% of the young members were posting content related to sex, violence, or drug use.

On the bright side, it seems that most of the young social networkers were open to changing their behavior. When a selected group of teens received an email from a physician warning them about posting such risky content in a public forum, nearly 1/5 of them promptly removed the inflammatory postings from their profiles.

According to Dr. Dimitri Christakis, one of the senior authors of the study, the key is to “teach teens and parents to use the Internet responsibly”. That was one of the main objectives of Mary Kay Hoal, founder of Yoursphere.com. A fully monitored and regulated social networking site geared toward kids and teens between 9 and 18 years of age, Yoursphere is focused on providing a safe, positive, and engaging environment without the dangers posed by sites that allow a mix of kids and adults. Yoursphere carefully monitors all content to prevent members from posting offensive or provocative material.

Kimberly Mitchell, a research professor at the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, urges parents not to attempt to completely ban their children's use of social networking sites, pointing out that these online communities can serve as positive outlets when used and regulated properly.

To learn more about how Yoursphere is working to safeguard kids from online predators while preserving the benefits of online networking, visit [www.Yoursphere.com](http://www.Yoursphere.com).

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