

# NET CETERA

OnGuardOnline.gov's Internet  
Safety Campaign for Children

A Report to Congress



Federal Trade Commission  
March 2010

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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Jon Leibowitz, Chairman  
Pamela Jones Harbour, Commissioner  
William E. Kovacic, Commissioner  
J. Thomas Rosch, Commissioner



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## Introduction

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In September 2008, Congress passed the Broadband Data Improvement Act, which directed the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to “carry out a nationwide program to increase public awareness and provide education regarding strategies to promote the safe use of the Internet by children,” and to submit a report to Congress that describes the activities implemented by the agency during the preceding calendar year.<sup>1</sup> This report outlines how the FTC used its prior experience in online safety education to develop a program specifically for parents and children, and how the FTC is working with various partners to distribute this information nationally.



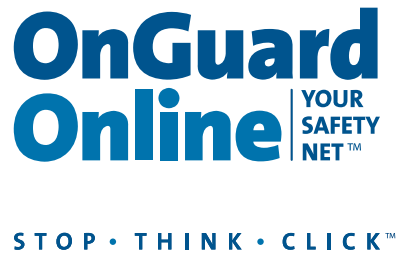
## OnGuardOnline.gov

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The FTC has extensive experience developing and implementing national consumer education campaigns. Consumer education is integral to all major law enforcement initiatives and raises awareness of emerging consumer protection issues. The FTC writes consumer education material in a practical, plain-language style and presents it in an accessible, attractive way. Collaborations with public and private sector partners extend the reach of the agency's consumer protection messages and advance its education goals.

The FTC developed and manages OnGuardOnline.gov, a project of the federal government and the technology community to help people guard against Internet fraud, secure their computers, and protect their privacy. OnGuardOnline.gov is a multifaceted campaign that began with and still centers on a website of the same name. Since the launch of OnGuardOnline.gov and AlertaenLínea.gov, its Spanish-language counterpart, in September 2005, almost 11 million visitors have accessed these sites for information about computer security.

The FTC created OnGuardOnline.gov with input from consumer advocates, security experts, and federal officials



from a variety of agencies. These groups remain critical to the campaign's success. They promote the website and provide substantive content and feedback. As a result, OnGuardOnline.gov is comprehensive and up-to-date.

This flexibility and emphasis on working with partners has encouraged more than 30 nonprofit organizations, industry groups, and government agencies to join the campaign.<sup>2</sup> To date, 13 federal agencies are OnGuardOnline.gov partners:

- Army Criminal Investigation Command
- Commodity Futures Trading Commission
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Education
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs
- Federal Communications Commission
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
- Federal Trade Commission
- Internal Revenue Service
- Naval Criminal Investigative Service
- Securities and Exchange Commission
- United States Postal Inspection Service

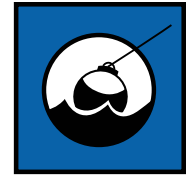
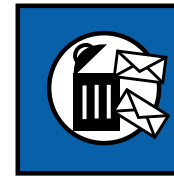
Representatives from most of these offices and other interested federal agencies met in December 2009 to discuss OnGuardOnline.gov, ideas for publicizing and contributing to its content, and how to collaborate with

one another. This and other recent events bode well for the continued and increased participation of federal agencies: The Department of Education and the Federal Communications Commission became OnGuardOnline.gov partners in 2009, and in October 2009, President Obama directed people to OnGuardOnline.gov in a presidential proclamation<sup>3</sup> and video on the White House blog<sup>4</sup> about National Cyber Security Awareness Month.

Beyond using its roster of official partners, the OnGuardOnline.gov campaign depends on schools, community groups, businesses, and other organizations and individuals to spread the word about staying safe online. In this way, the practical information available on the site reaches many more people than it would if the FTC acted alone.

The design of the site and the quality of the resources it hosts encourage and facilitate these partnerships. An update in September 2008 made the information on

OnGuardOnline.gov and AlertaenLínea.gov even more interactive and easy to share. Visitors can search for a particular topic, “grab” games and videos for use on their own sites, find free publications and



information on how to order, and download web buttons and banners. Articles on more than 20 topics — from email scams to social networking to spyware, links to the OnGuardOnline.gov partners, and suggestions for using OnGuardOnline.gov materials to promote online safety are among the features on the site. Because these resources are in the public domain, OnGuardOnline.gov is a program that other organizations — including some international groups — can, and do, make their own.

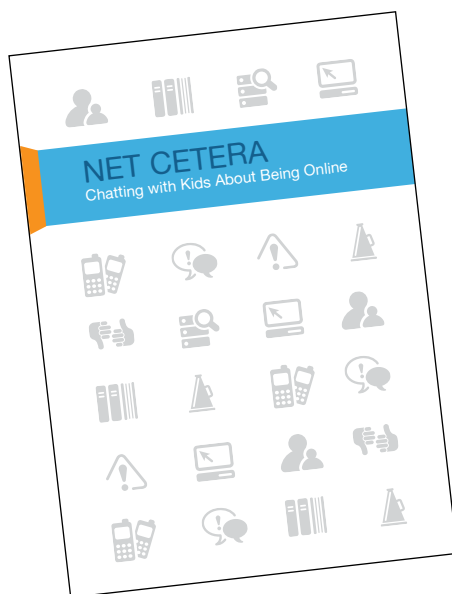
In August 2009, the FTC began surveying visitors to OnGuardOnline.gov to measure satisfaction with the site and learn where and how the site could be improved. The feedback has been very positive: For October through December 2009, the site scored a 76 in overall customer satisfaction, compared with an average score of 72 for all websites that use this survey, 73 for all public sector websites, and 74 for all federal websites.<sup>5</sup> A comment from the survey highlights the value of making these resources available to outside groups: *“A District Attorney’s office employee spoke at our local Senior Center Computer Club meeting recently. He gave everyone information on your valuable site. This site is very informative and will make us all wiser about e-mail scams and identity theft. Keep up your wonderful work!”*



## Net Cetera

The most recent addition to the OnGuardOnline.gov campaign is *Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online*. The FTC created this new guide for parents in response to Congress's call for "a nationwide program to increase public awareness and provide education regarding strategies to promote the safe use of the Internet by children."

The FTC chose to create a guide for parents because research suggests that when children want important information, most rely on their parents. The booklet, which is available in English and Spanish, emphasizes that the best way to keep children safe online is to talk to them, and it gives parents the information they need to have productive conversations with their kids. By discussing responsible socializing and communicating, parents — regardless of whether they are technologically savvy — can help their kids make better decisions about online behavior.



*"Net Cetera: Chatting With Kids About Being Online' is probably the single best resource I've ever seen regarding online safety. This exhaustive, 54-page PDF has information for teachers, kids and parents alike, is well-written, visually pleasing, dead accurate, easy-to-understand, and suitable for printing in sections and distributing in classrooms or at meetings. It's a guidebook that can help everyone develop safe online habits."*

Kevin Jarrett

K-4 Computer Teacher & Technology Facilitator  
Northfield Community School, Northfield, NJ

The FTC wrote *Net Cetera* with input from groups that work regularly with parents and children in this space, such as ConnectSafely.org and the Internet Keep Safe Coalition, and from groups devoted to finding out how Americans use the Internet, such as the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Drawing on their expertise, as well as its own experience managing OnGuardOnline.gov, the FTC wrote a comprehensive guide with practical information about online safety topics that are most relevant for today's parents, including social networking, cyberbullying, sexting, and mobile phones.

## Using Net Cetera

Following the successful outreach model of its other consumer education campaigns — including OnGuardOnline.gov — the FTC is working with outside groups to promote and distribute the guide. For groups and individuals who want to share it with their families, friends, and communities, *Net Cetera* is available at OnGuardOnline.gov and in Spanish at AlertaenLínea.gov. People also can order free copies through the FTC’s bulk order site, [bulkorder.ftc.gov](http://bulkorder.ftc.gov).<sup>6</sup> Like all the FTC’s consumer education materials, *Net Cetera* is free and in the public domain. The FTC encourages groups and individuals to order as many copies as they can use, include excerpts in their newsletters and blogs, and “grab” the web button from OnGuardOnline.gov for use on their own websites.

*“The FTC and all the other agencies and organizations involved in creating the Net Cetera report deserve high praise for what they’ve done here. Absolutely outstanding work.”*

Adam Thierer  
President  
The Progress & Freedom Foundation

*“I love the new guide and it’s VERY useful! I also appreciate that we can provide it to our communities for free.”*

Stephanie Lister  
Assistant US Attorney  
Eastern District of Washington

There is space on the back for a group to affix its own sticker with a logo or information.

The FTC has developed additional resources for those who wish to use *Net Cetera* in their communities, including a bookmark with tips for starting the conversation with kids, and a PowerPoint presentation at OnGuardOnline.gov to introduce an audience to the information in *Net Cetera*.

Finally, the guide is practical, plain-language, and value-neutral — it encourages parents to communicate their own values — so almost every parent can use it with their children. A variety of groups have used *Net Cetera* in their online safety programs already, and have promoted it in their blogs and newsletters, including the Better Business Bureau,<sup>7</sup> the National Association of Attorneys General,<sup>8</sup> The Progress & Freedom Foundation,<sup>9</sup> the website News and Views from the Christian Right,<sup>10</sup> and school districts across the country.<sup>11</sup>



## Promotion and Distribution

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Given the importance of children's safety online, the FTC recommends that schools use both OnGuardOnline.gov and *Net Cetera* as part of their online safety programs. Schools are uniquely able to reach children and their parents. And because so much computer and other media use takes place in the home, pairing teachers and parents in these efforts more fully encourages safe and responsible online behavior, and reinforces consistent messaging.

To reach schools as well as parents and other adult mentors across the country, the FTC is working through school districts, state PTAs, law enforcement agencies, national nonprofits, parenting and education blogs, and members of groups like the Online Safety and Technology Working Group.<sup>12</sup>

*Net Cetera* has been available to the public since October 21, 2009. Between then and February 28, 2010, the FTC distributed over 1,550,000 copies of the guide. In 2009, the FTC sent out 464,000 copies of the guide in English and 32,850 copies in Spanish.

*“On behalf of the entire Wilson Tiger community of 1520 students and 180 faculty and staff, I want to say thanks! The online safety booklets were enthusiastically well received by the majority of teachers and students. Every student received a copy in their second period class and we had a series of discussion prompts for teachers to use. Students were encouraged to continue the discussions with parents and to share the booklet with their parents. Thanks for letting us receive the online safety booklets so hot off the press. Please consider us for future teen related FTC products.”*

Alex Wilson  
Director, Office of Academic Development  
Woodrow Wilson Senior High School, Washington, DC

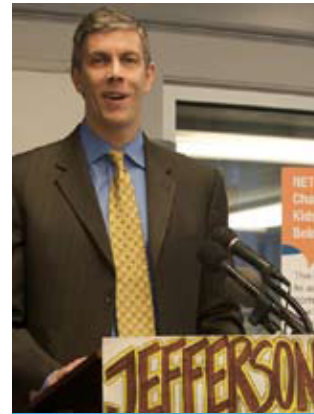
Distribution highlights since publication include:

- Schools or school systems in 49 states and the District of Columbia have ordered copies of *Net Cetera*.
- Police and sheriff departments in more than 30 states have ordered copies of the guide.
- State PTAs in Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, and New York ordered copies, as did 14 state attorneys

During the week of January 10, 2010, the Cobb County School District (suburban Atlanta) distributed 120,000 copies of *Net Cetera* — one to every family in the district. Cobb County is the second largest school district in Georgia. The district also sent a letter to each principal explaining *Net Cetera* and how to share it with families in their schools, and highlighted the guide on its website.<sup>13</sup>

general. The National Association of Attorneys General included an article about *Net Cetera* in its September-October 2009 Cybercrime Newsletter.

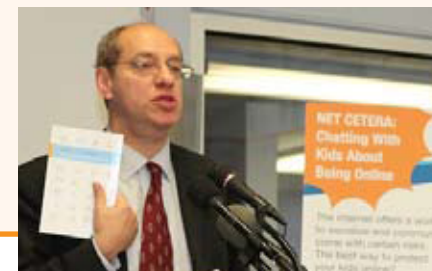
- Representatives Melissa Bean and Frank Wolf and Senators Jay Rockefeller, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Mark Pryor, and Roger Wicker signed and circulated letters about *Net Cetera* to their Hill colleagues, encouraging them to use the guide in their districts and to link to it from their websites. The FTC sent copies of the booklet to district offices as well, and will continue to work with Congress to spread the word about online safety.



Secretary Duncan

US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski, and Federal Trade Commission Chairman Jon Leibowitz officially launched *Net Cetera* on December 16, 2009, at

Jefferson Middle School in Washington, DC. At the middle school, which is known for its emphasis on science and technology, the officials met with students and teachers to discuss online safety. Chairman Leibowitz summed up the guide, saying, “The conversations that make kids good digital citizens aren’t about the technology; they’re about communicating your values as a parent. Teaching kids to treat others as they’d like to be treated online is key. *Net Cetera* tells you how to start those conversations — even if you think your kids are more tech-savvy than you are.”



Chairman Leibowitz

Through January 31, 2010, the FTC distributed over 100,000 copies of the booklet in Spanish. During this time, *Net Cétera: Cómo charlar con sus hijos sobre su comportamiento en línea* went to schools or school systems in 42 states and the District of Columbia; community groups, libraries, and police departments; and organizations that serve Hispanics, such as United Migrant Opportunity Services in Wisconsin and Centro Paraguayo de Palm Beach in Florida. Spanish-language media coverage of the guide includes [impre.com](#)<sup>14</sup> and [Tecnopadres.com](#), an AOL website.<sup>15</sup>

- Nonprofits such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the Internet Keep Safe Coalition are distributing the guide at events across the country.
- Companies such as Facebook, MySpace, Ning, and Sprint are linking to *Net Cetera* from their safety or resources pages.
- The *Christian Science Monitor*,<sup>16</sup> *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*,<sup>17</sup> and *Miami Herald*<sup>18</sup> have run stories about the guide.

- 22 shopping malls in 6 states (Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York) gave out the *Net Cetera* bookmark at their Santa displays.
- *Net Cetera* was the USA.gov featured publication for January 2010 and is in the Jump\$tart Coalition Clearinghouse database.

## Next steps

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The FTC will continue promoting *Net Cetera* and OnGuardOnline.gov in a variety of ways:

- To encourage individuals and communities to use and spread this information, the FTC is developing a community outreach toolkit, which will include PowerPoint presentations, videos, handouts for parents, and materials for children highlighting important messages from the guide.
- OnGuardOnline.gov is exploring entering the social networking space with a Facebook page, and will be able to use that venue to promote *Net Cetera*.
- The FTC aims to use the momentum from recent events with other federal agencies — such as the *Net Cetera* launch — to recruit more federal partners for the OnGuardOnline.gov campaign.

- The Naval Criminal Investigative Service, an OnGuardOnline.gov partner, is planning to distribute *Net Cetera* and other OnGuardOnline.gov materials to every Navy and Marine installation around the world in late 2010 or early 2011.
- The FTC recently joined the National School Safety Coalition, a Consumers Union-led initiative that brings together education, government, health, and parent groups to disseminate consumer information and improve child safety. The FTC will work with other members of the Coalition to distribute *Net Cetera*.
- The FTC will continue to work with state departments of education, school districts, and individual schools to get *Net Cetera* and OnGuardOnline.gov to parents and educators. Additionally, the FTC will reach out to other groups that work with kids, such as summer camps, state education technology associations, and scouting organizations. Finally, the FTC will promote its online safety materials at conferences that target community leaders and educators, including the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Annual Convention, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) National Seminar, and the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference.

## Endnotes

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1. 15 U.S.C. §§ 6552-6553.
2. Non-profit and industry partners include GetNetWise.org, the National Cyber Security Alliance, the Anti-Phishing Working Group, i-SAFE, AARP, the National Consumers League, the Direct Marketing Association, WiredSafety.org, the SANS Institute, the National Association of Attorneys General, the Better Business Bureau, NetFamilyNews, the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA), the National Crime Prevention Council, the Association of College Unions International, Latinos in Information Sciences and Technology Association (LISTA), StopBadware.org, and iKeepSafe.org.
3. See [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Presidential-Proclamation-National-Cybersecurity-Awareness-Month/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Presidential-Proclamation-National-Cybersecurity-Awareness-Month/).
4. See <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Protecting-yourself-online/>.
5. A wide variety of businesses, as well as more than 100 different federal agencies, use this survey — the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) — to measure website satisfaction.
6. Consumers can use [bulkorder.ftc.gov](http://bulkorder.ftc.gov) to order bulk quantities — usually more than 50 copies — of free FTC education materials on topics ranging from online safety to job scams to identity theft. The bulk order site receives about 12,000 orders every year, and the FTC's warehouse in Pueblo, Colorado ships about 12 million publications every year.
7. See <http://www.bbb.org/us/post/ftc-releases-guide-to-help-parents-reduce-online-risks-for-children-1080>.

8. See [http://naag.org/assets/files/pdf/cybercrime\\_September-October\\_2009%20Cybercrime.pdf](http://naag.org/assets/files/pdf/cybercrime_September-October_2009%20Cybercrime.pdf).
9. See [http://blog.pff.org/archives/2009/10/net\\_cetera\\_an\\_outstanding\\_new\\_government\\_online\\_sa.html](http://blog.pff.org/archives/2009/10/net_cetera_an_outstanding_new_government_online_sa.html).
10. See [http://christianright.us/?p=106&bcsi\\_scan\\_DA3493EE5FC9D524=blmIxT4azwAJ19ftaKVJaC4AAAD/sIgQ](http://christianright.us/?p=106&bcsi_scan_DA3493EE5FC9D524=blmIxT4azwAJ19ftaKVJaC4AAAD/sIgQ).
11. For example, the Magnolia Independent School District in Texas (<http://www.magnoliaisd.org/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=18370&&PHPSESSID=ffd4570a6dec61cce797c61cdfbd845e>), the North Platte Public School District in Nebraska (<http://www.nppsd.org/vnews/display.v/ART/4b57784e7f651>), and Orange County Public Schools in Florida (<https://www.ocps.net/cs/services/student/SAFE/Pages/ParentResources.aspx>).
12. The Online Safety and Technology Working Group (OSTWG) was also created in accordance with the Broadband Data Improvement Act. Participants, including online safety educators, industry representatives, and federal agencies, are evaluating industry efforts and making recommendations to promote online safety for children through education, labeling, and parental control technology. The Working Group is also evaluating and making recommendations on industry efforts to prevent and respond to criminal activity involving children and the Internet.
13. See [http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/communications/news/2010/20100111\\_NetCetera.aspx](http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/communications/news/2010/20100111_NetCetera.aspx).
14. See <http://www.impre.com/educacion/2009/12/17/evita-que-tus-hijos-corran-rie-164127-1.html>.
15. See <http://www.tecnopadres.com/2009/12/21/hablando-con-tus-hijos-conectados-en-linea/>.
16. See <http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2009/1216/How-to-keep-your-teen-safe-on-the-Internet>.
17. See <http://www.ajc.com/news/cobb-schools-partners-with-280236.html>.
18. See <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/action-line/story/1438066.html>.

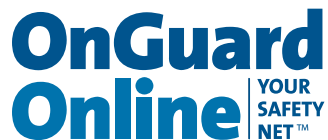
# NET CETERA



Chatting with Kids About Being Online

***Net Cetera: Chatting with Kids About Being Online*** is a free guide from OnGuardOnline.gov with practical tips to help parents help their kids navigate the online world.

To order free copies of *Net Cetera*, visit [bulkorder.ftc.gov](http://bulkorder.ftc.gov).



STOP • THINK • CLICK™

**OnGuardOnline.gov** provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology community to help you guard against internet fraud, secure your computers, and protect your privacy.



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