It's important to be a good citizen wherever you may find yourself, by following the rules of that place. The Internet is a "place" with its own very special rules. People who communicate over the Internet are called "cybercitizens." It's important to learn the rules of the Internet before you log on, so that you can be a "good cybercitizen." Each of the following stories describes a situation that you might find yourself in while "surfing" the Internet. What would you do in each of these situations? Click on one of the "GO!" links to choose what you might do, and what might happen as a result of your choice.

"My friend Joey and I wanted to buy this really cool computer game, but it cost a lot of money. Then Joey found a web site where you could get this game FOR FREE just by trading a copy of any other game that you had. But I've heard that copying games for free without the permission of the company who makes them is illegal."

GO!

"My friend Quentin brags that he can break into any computer there is! He figures out how to get into a computer network, and then he can read anybody's e-mail or even send fake e-mail from someone else's account. He says this is really fun, and he wants me to help him get into the computer at school."

GO!

"I have a paper due in history tomorrow, and I just started to research it. I found a web site that has a lot of term papers ALREADY WRITTEN. They are grouped by subject matter and age group (middle school, high school, college, or graduate school). There's a paper there on my topic. All I have to do to get a copy is trade a copy of any other paper that I did for school. That would be a lot easier than researching and writing this entire paper in one night."

GO!

"At school, I saw this girl enter her password for Internet access, and now I can log in and read all her e-mail. I can send e-mail from her account, too, so that people will think the message is from her."

GO!

" I got a copy of a really funny computer 'joke' from my friend. It asks you if you want Internet Access for FREE? When you say 'yes,' it changes some files on

your computer so that each time you log on, your computer says ' Way to go, DODO'. I think I will send it to my friends as a joke."

GO !

DO:



DO use the Internet to help with schoolwork. The Internet is a source of great volumes of information. It's like having the world's largest library at your fingertips! Some good sites to check out:

B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper.

To e-mail questions to experts, click on NJNIE Project:
Ask An Expert Page.

PITSCO's Ask An Expert.



DO use the Internet to "visit" museums in far away places. Some examples are:

The Louvre, Paris, France.

The Exploratorium, San Francisco, California.

The Smithsonian Institution.

DO use the Internet to meet children in other countries or to keep in touch with pen pals who live far away in this country or other countries.



Some on-line services host chat rooms especially for children, and monitor them periodically for safety. You can safely establish an international mail pen pal through an existing program sponsored by your school, and then expand your pen pal communications to the Internet if your pen pal has access to Internet e-mail at his or her school or a nearby university.

DO be careful about talking to "strangers" on a computer network. Who are

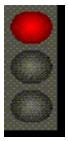
these people anyway? Some people say and do things which are **NOT NICE**.

DO use the Internet to learn more about universities and colleges that you may be interested in attending. Almost all colleges post some information on the Internet. Many colleges let you take a "virtual tour" of the campus, or submit applications for admission or financial aid applications on line. To find a college web site click on the Alphabetical Listing of College and University Home Pages.



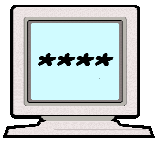
DO respect the privacy of other users on the Internet, just as you expect your privacy to be respected. How would you feel if someone read your private e-mail or your grades?

DO be careful when you "download" (copy) programs from the Internet. Use a virus scan program before loading it on your computer. Some programs on the Internet contain viruses that can harm your computer.



DON'T:

DON'T give your password to anyone. Passwords are intended to protect your computer and your files. It's like giving the key to your house away!



DON'T answer messages that make you feel uncomfortable because they seem improper, indecent, or threatening. **TELL A GROWN-UP RIGHT AWAY.**

DON'T give any personal information, such as your family's address, phone number, credit card or calling card numbers, your school's name, or your picture to anyone on a computer network that you don't personally know.

DON'T arrange to meet anyone you've met on the Internet without telling your parents. Some people on the Internet lie about who they are, how old they are, and why they want to meet you.

DON'T try to break into computers. It's not a game. It's a crime and it's an invasion of privacy. Computers often contain sensitive information. How would you feel if someone broke into a computer and changed your grades? Deleted your term paper? Cut off your telephone?



DON'T steal copyrighted computer programs ("software") by copying it from the Internet. This is the same as stealing it from a store. People work hard to develop new programs and deserve to be paid for them. If software designers don't get paid for their work, they can't continue creating new software, such as new educational games or tools that help with schoolwork.

DON'T make copies of any copyrighted material, like books, magazines, or music without the permission of the author, publisher or artist. Copyrighted works are available (usually illegally) on the Internet. You are committing a crime if you copy and distribute them.

DON'T copy material that you find on the Internet and pretend that it's your own work. It's the same as copying a book or magazine article and pretending that you wrote it. It's easy to get caught. Remember, your teacher and thousands of other students have access to the same material.

Some kids think they can't get into trouble for hacking computer systems and that hacking big networks like the phone company, the military, or NASA is harmless fun. But that's not true, as one teenager in Boston found out recently.



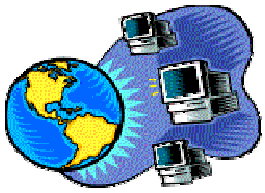
The hacker and some of his friends found a way to hack into a computer that belongs to the phone company and that directs telephone traffic in the Boston area. After he got into the system, the hacker decided to reboot the computer, which basically made it crash. The first time he did this, the hacker completely shut off phone service for six hours to a regional airport so that the air traffic control tower had an extrememly hard time communicating. The second time he crashed the computer, he cut off phone service to about 600 homes.



The phone company reported this to the United States Secret Service, which investigated the case and indentified all the kids involved. Although the Justice Department does not prosecute juveniles very often, the United States Attorney's Office in Boston charged the ringleader of the group with several serious crimes.



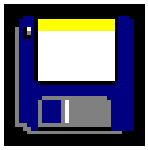
Even though the student won't go to jail, he did receive very serious punishment: he lost his computer, must pay $5000 to the telephone company, and must work in the community for free for 250 hours. He will also be on probation for the next two years, and during that time he is not allowed to use any computer with a modem. That means, of course, that he is off the Internet and all other networks.



DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU! If you think about it, it's pretty easy to see why this student got into so much trouble. How would you feel if you were one of the 600 houses that lost phone service? What if you needed to call 911? How would you feel if you had been flying into the airport that lost telephone service?



The best way to stay out of trouble with computers is to imagine before you do something how you'd feel if someone did it to you. You wouldn't like it if someone opened your mail or looked into your bedroom windows, and if you wouldn't do this either, don't hack into computers.



Lots of kids know enough about computers to hack into big networks, but so what? It doesn't mean you're smart, it just means you don't mind hurting other people--because it does hurt them. People are not going to want to hire you to protect computers if you've been a hacker. It's a question of trust, not skill.



If you like computers, don't use your brains to hack systems, invade other people's privacy, and take away their networks. Hacking can get you in a whole lot more trouble than you think and is a completely creepy thing to do. If you're so smart, use that computer to do **great** things!