



## **Case study: Stalking Sarah—Cyberstalking**

### **Theme**

Stalking can take place online and offline. Students will explore the need to be cautious when meeting people online by reflecting on the case study.

### **Key learning/subject areas**

Cross curricula.

### **Duration**

One to two periods.

### **Objectives**

On completion of this activity students will be able to:

- identify some of the potential impacts of cyberstalking
- evaluate how much personal information they have online
- apply strategies to protect themselves online.

Depending on available time the outputs of this activity will be:

- a reflective piece on the student's use of the internet and mobile technology
- a list of strategies to help a young person protect their personal information.



## Resources/links/materials required

### CyberNetrix CD-ROM

Object in the room	Activity
TV	Stalking Sarah
Helmet	Staying cybersafe
Mobile phone	Mobile smart
Laptop	Chatting smart Chat smart information Glossary
Phone	Who're you going to call?

### Materials required at school

- Case study activity handout.
- Case study transcript handout.
- If desired, computers with internet access to view selected websites and video clips.

### Additional resources

#### Websites

- ACMA provides information on different aspects of cybersafety.  
[www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au)
- Kids Help Line provides free, confidential and anonymous telephone and online counselling.  
[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

#### Video clips

Video clips dealing with online predators and cyberstalking have been developed by government agencies including the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) in the United Kingdom. These might need to be viewed to assess their suitability for students. Videos can be downloaded from YouTube at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). Use search term *CEOP*.



## **Introduction**

The focus of this case study is cyberstalking on the internet. Students can undertake this activity by reading the handout and case study transcript, or in conjunction with viewing the video on the CyberNetrix CD-ROM.

## **Prior learning**

Students need to have knowledge of safety issues and possible actions in response to different situations when using the internet and mobile technologies. Students also need an understanding of chat rooms and how to protect their personal information in an online environment.



## Activity description

### 1. Small groups/whole class activity

Introduce the topic by asking the students if they know what cyberstalking is.

As a class, students can discuss the following:

- What is cyberstalking?
- What different technologies might be involved in cyberstalking?
- Is cyberstalking any different to offline stalking? Do you think it is worse or just different?
- Do the people involved in cyberstalking have to know each other?

Students can view or read 'Stalking Sarah'.

Students can engage in discussion by using the handout.

### 2. Individual activity

Ask students to spend a few minutes in reflection. They might write down their thoughts or consider them quietly:

- If someone was looking for information about you online what would they find?
- Do you think it would be easy for them to contact you?
- Is there any information you might wish to change or remove?

It may be decided to list some points for student reflection. For example, students should think about how they have named internet sites or messaging accounts, the photos they may have posted—those showing uniforms or identifiable places—and any contact details they might have provided.

### 3. Individuals/pairs/small group

Ask students to consider what they have heard while viewing this case study. Ask them what safety tips they would provide to a friend or a younger family member just starting out online. List at least five.



## **Teacher notes**

Students may be vulnerable if they post personal information on the internet. The focus of this lesson is cyberstalking using the case study of 'Sarah'.

This subject may be sensitive for some students. It may be advisable to contact the school's welfare coordinator before beginning the activity if it is believed the case study might upset some students. The additional resources section lists websites and video clips to which students can be referred.



## Handout

### Case study: Stalking Sarah—Cyberstalking

Individually or with a partner, watch the case study video or read the case study transcript and then answer the questions below. Be prepared to talk through the answers with the rest of the class.

1. Sarah logs on to Messenger or a chat room to communicate with her family and friends or other people who are anywhere in the world.

Do you use Messenger or chat rooms? What do you do and how do you keep yourself safe?

2. 'Some people think that just because there's a screen in front of them then they're safe and people can't hurt them.'

What insight does it give you into safe behaviour and risks? What does this mean?

3. Sarah uses chat rooms a lot and she's always careful who she talks to. She was shocked at how easy it was for someone to stalk her based on the tiny pieces of information she'd revealed about herself online.

With a partner or individually, discuss/note down what types of information could lead a cyberstalker to someone. What information about yourselves do you share on the internet? What information will you change as a consequence of reading this story?

### Optional questions

4. What advice does Sarah give on actions to take to avoid being cyberstalked?
5. Identify what you would do differently when using technology as a result of watching this case study.



## Handout

### Case study: Stalking Sarah—Cyberstalking

#### *Transcript*

'There's this one particular chat room I use on a regular basis and there was this guy that I got to know quite well. He seemed really nice.

I told him how I play for my local netball team and we discovered that we both had tickets to the Big Day Out, which was only a few weeks away.

Anyway, the next time we were chatting he started asking me really personal and gross questions. I realised he was a bit of a freak so I ended the conversation straightaway, plus I blocked him from sending me messages. But then he started harassing me and sending me disgusting emails, attaching explicit photos of himself. When I told him to stop it he sent even more abusive messages and graphic photos.

My parents contacted my ISP and changed my email address, as well as blocking him from sending me more messages. But even though I'd blocked him from contacting me online, he knew the chat rooms I used regularly and posted messages there saying false and abusive things about me.

Suddenly, I started getting these threatening text messages from an unknown mobile number. The messages were saying that this man was going to find me and do all these terrible things to me. I was really upset so I told my parents, and finally we reported it to the police.

The police discovered that there were various pieces of information about me on the internet that would've helped the man to track me down. For one thing, I had posted my name, age and photo on my chat profile, which can be viewed by anyone. On top of that, my netball team had a website that listed when and where our games were each week, and my mobile number had been posted online because of a charity event I was organising.

With just a few tiny things I'd told this guy about my life, he was able to find out heaps about me. He knew what my mobile number was and, worst of all, he knew where I'd be at certain times of the week when I played sport.

It may not seem like a big thing, but the tiny pieces of information we leave behind us on the internet can lead to potentially dangerous situations.'