What's the big deal?

Do you enjoy playing games online? Chances are, if you don't, you know somebody who does. The gaming industry is huge! Did you know that around the world, more money is spent on games than on the film industry!

Multiplayer magic

With the internet, it is now possible to play with dozens, even hundreds of people at the same time through online games like World of Warcraft, Clash of Clans or gaming portals like Miniclip.

Being able to game with people all over the world makes online gaming even more exciting and with the ability to 'chat' in these games, it is easy to 'make friends' with the people you play with.

Just like in the real world though, you need to be careful when playing with strangers. Some people you meet online may not be very nice!

5 things to look out for

It is easy to lie online and some of these 'online friends' may be adults who want to hurt you. How can you tell?

1. **They will try to gain your trust and 'make friends' with you.**
   They build this trust by making you think they have things in common with you - like hobbies or the game that you are playing with them.
2. **They might try to get you to do things,**
   like add them on a social network, give them your phone number, send them photos or chat on webcam. This can get very difficult if they talk about things which make you uncomfortable or ask you to do things you don't want to do.
3. **They might offer to tell you 'cheats' to help you out with a game.**
   If they ask for something in return, think about why they are doing this - are they a 'real' friend or trying to build your trust - be alert!
4. **Remember, if they share a link with you it could be a computer virus or spyware,**
   which tells the person your personal information without you knowing - be careful and don't click on links from people you don't know!
5. **They may encourage you to tell them personal information**such as where you live and what school you go to. This is part of their attempt to get your trust and will tell them how to find you in the real world.

How can I play online games safely?

1. **Don't be fooled into thinking that you know the people you meet online.**
   It's ok for them to be 'online gaming friends', just don't tell them everything about yourself, or chat to them anywhere else online, like on a social network or a messaging app.

2. **Always choose a username that does not reveal any personal information**
   such as your full name and hometown. That way if someone is making you feel uncomfortable you can block them and not worry that they can find you again.
3. **Only play online games when you have updated antivirus software and firewall activated.**
4. **Read the terms and conditions of use**
   within games to ensure there are no hidden charges! If you are not sure, get an adult to help you.
5. **Watch out for scams**
   when buying or selling 'property' inside a computer game and for being scammed by other users
6. **Remember, this is very different to when your parents were growing up**
   So if you love gaming online, it might be hard for them to understand how important it is to you. Keep them involved by letting them know what games you are playing and what you love about them.

Are you worried about someone you have met in an online game?

Is someone being weird with you in a game? Talk to an adult you trust or get help from CEOP.

Report it

CEOP

CEOP helps young people who are being sexually abused or are worried that someone they have met is trying to abuse them.

If you have met someone online, or face to face, and they are putting you under pressure to have sex or making you feel uncomfortable you should report to CEOP.

This might be someone:

- Making you have sex when you don't want to
- Chatting about sex online
- Asking you to meet up face to face if you have only met them online
- Asking you to do sexual things on webcam
- Asking for sexual pictures of you
- Making you feel worried, anxious or unsafe

If this is happening to you, or you are worried that it might be, you can report this to CEOP.