



# RELAUNCHED

## Who's chatting?

A specialist child protection unit within the Queensland Police Service has launched a revised version of a highly successful program providing safety advice for children using the internet.

Task Force Argos has launched a reworked "Who's chatting to your kids?" booklet which now covers more details about social networking, web cams and mobile telephone safety for children.

The project was the result of research conducted by Task Force Argos and from frontline experience gained through online covert operations and from interviewing child victims.

A sought after speaker on detecting internet paedophilia, Detective Acting Inspector Jon Rouse said

parents should be aware that social networking had become a greater concern and new varieties of mobile telephones could give users greater access to the internet.

"The internet contains many sites that are designed to encourage children and teenagers to communicate by messaging each other in real time. These sites allow them to not only chat with family or friends on their 'buddy' or contact list, but to also chat with various people at the same time.

"With the increase in popularity of social networking web sites, where children can post personal information about themselves including their name, age, location, photographs and contact details, we are actively encouraging parents to become involved in the process of setting up their child's online profile.

"As a first step you should learn how to set up your own personal social networking page first, just to learn about the security features that are available.

"It has been widely reported that predators use the internet as a tool to contact children. Social networking sites that are set up without enabling all of the available privacy settings provides an online catalogue for child sex offenders to browse and establish contact with children.

"It only takes one reply from an unsuspecting child and the predator may commence regular communication without parental knowledge. Once they have access to one child they soon gain access to the child's list of contacts. Those children then introduce this person to their friends who in turn repeat

this process. In a very short period of time a predator can be speaking to several groups of children who believe this person is merely another school age friend.

"Task Force Argos investigators have identified children who have as many as 700 contacts on their contact lists. In one investigation we arrested five predators listed on one child's "buddy" list.

"As parents and caregivers it is important that your child knows every person on their "buddy" list personally. They should also be able to tell you the person's real name and how they know them," Acting Inspector Rouse said.

The revised version of "Who's chatting to your kids?" is available on the Queensland Police website, [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au)