



## **A Call to Arms – Protecting Your Family on the Computer and Internet**

*A personal message from Jeff Obara of God Squad Canada*

One of the things that struck me the most attending my first ever God Squad Men's Conference, was hearing the story of these two police officers who had been saying their rosaries together in their squad car, while working the streets of Calgary. It gave me a great sense of consolation and hope, to know that there were men out there fighting not only to save and protect lives, but also to save and protect *souls*. It caused me to look inward and outward, and I left the conference with the realization that this call was a call to all men. It was a call that I had yet to answer. For as a husband and father, I was certain that I would do anything to save and protect the lives of my wife and children. But was I doing everything I could to save and protect their souls? I wasn't. Not even close. A brief spiritual inventory of our home and possessions told me so. A glance over our DVD and CD collections told me so. A quick scan through the channels of our cable package told me so. But perhaps most of all, sitting down at our family computer told me so.

Gentlemen, having worked in the field of computers and information technology for almost ten years, in the private, corporate, government, and academic sectors, I can tell you that in this area, where the safety and protection of souls is concerned, a great number of us are failing. A great number of us are failing miserably and many, many souls are being lost. In some cases, lives are being lost.

A great number of us are not taking seriously the threat that computers and the Internet pose to our own, and our families, salvation. What we are seeing as a result is an unprecedented rise in crime and addictions – to pornography, gambling, video gaming, and the Internet itself. And in an age of widespread divorce and destruction to the traditional family, the Internet has become the most influential teacher, guide, and companion to a great number of the parentless generation.

I will admit that the saddest conversations I am part of, are those with clients who are oblivious to what might be (and most often is) happening on their home or workplace computers. It goes something like this:

“Oh, my little Johnny just loves his computer. He never leaves his room. He's always on it, chatting with his friends about who knows what. I don't even know how to turn the silly thing on! Anyway, it stopped working on him – can you have a look? He needs it for school.”

Well, as it turns out, little Johnny is part of a chat room group that finds hardcore pornography websites, pictures, and videos, and passes them around to other members of the group. The most recent site he visited, one that included graphic depictions of bestiality, rape, and incest, had a virus that installed itself while he was watching a downloaded video, and this virus has now made his computer unbootable.

I wish I could say this type of experience was rare but sadly, in my experience, it is *frequent*.

We have a park just behind our home. I was looking at it out the window one night, and imagining it as if it were the Internet. The park would be full of people, vendors, maybe some friends, a lot of open books and shops and stores. There might also be criminals roaming freely, predators even. Prostitutes and indecency of all sorts would be just around each corner. And maybe there would be some gambling, public pagan worship, and perhaps a few clinics on how to make homemade drugs or weapons. There would be no gates or fees, nor requirements to enter. And certainly there would be no police officers in sight - none patrolling the park, cruising in their squad cars, nor saying their rosaries.

Would we let our kids go “play” at that park? Would we send them away and then turn our back on them, only requiring that they be back in time for dinner? Yet, this is essentially what we do when we allow our children unmonitored access to their computers and the Internet. We send them to that park, and we send them alone.

“But what can we do?” is often the response I get from a parent (or spouse) after suggesting they pay a little more attention to what’s going on with their computer. “I don’t know the first thing about computers.” Indeed, I can empathize with people – I work in the industry full-time, and have a very difficult time keeping up with the rapid changes and advancements in technology. At the same time, do we not take a different approach when it comes to our children and driving? After all, the vehicle - like the Internet - can be a tool of great pleasure, great utility and resource, or grave danger. Drivers have to be a certain age, with certain understanding and ability. We as parents need to know what they are driving, if it is safe, where they are going (we’ve usually been there ourselves), who they are going with, what they are going there for, and when they’ll be home. We don’t need to be mechanics - we just need to be sure we know *exactly* what is going on.

There is not enough space here, nor am I qualified, to give sufficient attention to these concerns. I am only asking – rather, begging - that we pay more attention and get informed for the sake of our children - for their souls and the souls of our families. Our God is merciful, and there is excellent resource available to all of us in how to approach this great and worthy challenge. I strongly recommend picking up one, or both, of the books noted below (available through Amazon and Chapters), and visiting some of the links included as well. Doing so should give you a good idea of what’s going on out there, and equip you with the tools needed to begin to defend and protect your family on the computer and the Internet.

I write this with sincere hope and prayer, that all of us men will become the rocks of our domestic churches, and that the gates of hell will not prevail against them!

- Jeff ([jeff.obara@god-squad.ca](mailto:jeff.obara@god-squad.ca))

**Books:** **Internet Protect Your Kids** - By Stephen Arterburn, author of the bestseller *Every Man’s Battle*  
**How to Protect Your Children on the Internet** - By Gregory S. Smith

**Links:** **The Internet 101:** [www.internet101.ca](http://www.internet101.ca)  
**Protect Your Kids on the Internet:** [www.protectkidsonthenet.com](http://www.protectkidsonthenet.com)  
**RCMP:** [http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/qc/infos\\_gen/publications/cybercrime/sec\\_web\\_e.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/qc/infos_gen/publications/cybercrime/sec_web_e.htm)