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## **First Major Study of MySpace Suggests Sexual Predator Reports in the Media Overblown/Unfounded—Parental Ignorance of Teen Activities on Site is High**

*Cal State Psychology Professor's Study of The World's Definitive Teen Hangout Finds Benefits and Drawbacks*

CARSON, CA (June 26, 2006) –MySpace is not the evil hotbed of sexual predators preying on internet-addicted teens that many in the media have suggested, according to Dr. Larry Rosen, a psychology professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Rosen has just completed the first major study of adolescents who use MySpace, the virtual community of 86 million members.

Rosen's research, which looked at the behaviors and attitudes of MySpace users, includes interviews with more than 1,500 MySpacers and 250 parents. Rosen's data also suggests that parents need to be more vigilant in making sure that kids aren't giving away personal information that would put them in harm's way.

"MySpace is the 13th largest country in the world. Teens live in this virtual world and parents need to pay attention. It is not a fad. It is not going away. And it is not a scary place. Teenagers can live and grow there with help from their parents," concludes Rosen. He observes that teens are forming invaluable friendships via MySpace--friendships that nurture their creativity and provide them with emotional support that might be lacking in their immediate circles.

Here is a quick overview of Rosen's findings by topic:

### MySpace and Sexual Predators:

- \* Only 7% of those teens interviewed were ever approached by anyone with a sexual intent and nearly all of them simply ignored the person and blocked him from their page.
- \* Two-thirds of the parents were sure that there were many sexual predators on MySpace, while only one-third of the teenagers shared this concern.
- \* When asked about media coverage, 66% of the parents felt that it was either understated or close to the truth.
- \* Conversely, 58% of the teens felt it was vastly overblown.
- \* Too much information: Nearly three-fourths of teens give out their school name, half give out their e-mail address and half give out information about activities they will be doing, including the location.

### MySpace Usage By Teens

- \* Teenagers spend an average of 15 hours per week on MySpace.
- \* One in three admits their MySpace activity has negatively affected their schoolwork, family life, or both.

\* However, while using MySpace teens find it easier to make friends, feel more honest and creative, and get emotional support from their “online friends.” The typical MySpacer has 278 “online friends,” including 37 close friends, more than half of whom they have never met.

#### Parental Awareness of MySpace

\* Only one-third of the parents have seen their child’s MySpace page and only 16% check it on a regular basis.

\* However, 70% of the adolescents said they would feel comfortable with their parents looking at their MySpace page.

\* 40% of the parents had never seen the photographs that their children posted on MySpace.

\* Nearly half the parents claimed to have limits on their children’s MySpace use, but only 25% of teens said those limits were upheld.

\* 43% of parents are not sure about how many days per week their child is on MySpace and 36% are not sure about how many hours per day they spend there.

\* Half the parents admit that their child uses the Internet from their bedroom rather than a location where the parent can supervise.

Rosen’s survey of more than 1500 MySpacers and parents was conducted in Los Angeles in May-June 2006 with subjects recruited by research students through contacts. He is working on a book about the impact of MySpace on adolescents, to be completed in late 2006. The book, targeted to parents of MySpacers, will provide a candid view of the benefits and potential hazards of MySpace, and include helpful advice for parents to keep their children safe while allowing them to benefit from their virtual world experiences.

#### About Dr. Larry Rosen

Dr. Larry Rosen is an award-winning professor of psychology, international expert on the “psychology of technology,” and author of TECHNOSTRESS: Coping With Technology @ Work @ Home @ Play.

Rosen is Past Chair and Professor of Psychology at California State University, Dominguez Hills. He writes a bi-monthly column for *The National Psychologist* and has been interviewed extensively in the national and local media by outlets including *Newsweek*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *USA Today*, *Good Morning America*, MSNBC, Fox News Channel, CNN, and Lifetime Television.

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