Quality of (Online) Life: 
Be Careful Out There

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With so many scams prevalent in today's world of advanced technology, why do so many individuals seem to believe they are not likely to ever be scammed? Predators and thieves are experts at using technology to steal from and do harm to unsuspecting folks.

For many of us, a large portion of our lives these days is lived online. We connect with family and friends on social media. We work online and play online. We shop online for everything from cereal to computers to cars. Many of us do much if not all of our financial transactions online.

Internet safety has become a fundamental topic in our digital world and includes knowing about one's Internet privacy and how one's behaviors can support a healthy interaction with the use of the Internet.

School has been back in session now for a couple months, which means social media use by children is more prevalent, due to peer-to-peer sharing. While Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and other sites are certainly not all bad, it is important to be aware of the potential dangers to all of us.

The term “online predator” often conjures up the image of a creepy older man at a computer screen waiting to lure an unsuspecting child. Internet safety statistics do not support this. Predators come in all ages and backgrounds and can easily contact children using Snapchat, Instagram Tik Tok and other apps.

Being safe online applies to all of us, not just children. As adults, it’s also important to pay attention to what we post and share online. Some parents (and other relatives) are very proud and excited about kids going to school, being in the band, playing sports, etc., that they post pictures that may include the child’s school and other frequented locations. Similarly, we may post pictures of our Halloween and Christmas decorations that include our front door and street address. Everyone we are connected to can see this information, and that can be dangerous. Others can save and take these images and post them to other accounts and unsavory websites.

Join us on November 12 to learn more about what you can do to help keep your children, other family members, friends and yourself safer in today's ever-evolving high tech world.

About the speaker: Cerise Peck is the Crime Prevention Specialist at the Richland Police Department and part of the South-East Regional Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce. She currently serves as the District 8 Regional Director for the Washington State Association of Crime Prevention. Born and raised in the Tri-Cities, Cerise has worked in the legal field for 19 years in both the private and public sectors. She studied Criminal Justice at Central Washington University and Washington State University. She is a mother of a 10-year-old and a 12-year-old – which is where she gets her passion to serve and to speak to the community on this important topic.