

Tips & Trends

Girls' Ministries—Staying in Touch

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Changing for a Greater Mpac

Over the next few weeks, you will begin to notice changes in the Missionettes/Mpact catalog, on our website, and in promotional items from your conference Girls' Ministries team. The IPHC Girls' Ministries office has prepared a one-page explanation (*Changing to Serve You Better*) about some of these changes and how to implement them over the next year. If you do not get this page, look for it on the website (<http://girls.iphc.org/helps.html>). The new name is meant to give a face lift to a program whose name was created more than 50 years ago. However, it is important to note that the name change to Mpact **will not** require churches to buy all new curriculum and support materials. As items are reprinted, they will reflect the name change, but the curriculum of the six clubs IS NOT changing.



communication. Webspeak is the secret language of teens, and it's showing up everywhere. I'm discovering I have a lot to learn if I'm going to stay in touch with today's girls.

What's a Parent/Leader to Do?

Vicki Courtney, founder of Virtuous Reality Ministries, has written a new book, *Logged On and Tuned Out*. It is a timely wake-up call to "low-tech (tuned out) parents whose high-tech (logged on) kids use modern computer and cell phone technology like second nature. It is a great resource for learning the new language our kids are speaking, and it would make a great book for a class to parents. Find parents in your church who are knowledgeable on these issues to help. Or at the least, encourage your parents **and** sponsors to purchase the book for a crash course.

The statistics in the Trends box below are pulled from this book. I've also highlighted some of the key steps the author suggests parents should take:

1. Install monitoring software.
2. If your kids are IMing, set up your own screen name and put them on your buddy list.
3. Learn the art of text messaging and webspeak (i.e. POS is parent over shoulder). Are you a POS?
4. Require your children to give you their log-in information and passwords for MySpace, etc.
5. Know what kind of photos and video clips your kids upload.

Other Sources

To learn more about web lingo & safety, visit these sites, but don't be surprised by what you may see:

- www.netlingo.com
- www.lingo2word.com
- www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/textmessageabbreviations.asp
- www.nationalcoalition.org/icare

Learning a New Language

One of the changes facing all of us is the challenge to learn a brand new language. It is fast becoming the language of not only our nation, but of the world. I'm not talking about English or Spanish. I'm talking about the language of the technology world in which our children are now actively engaged. You must know what your kids have access to and what they are doing with what they have. Part of that is a growing list of abbreviations and jargon that parents and leaders need to learn. There's a good article on this subject at <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Story?id=2820582&page=1>.

Although I consider myself a computer literate person, lately I've felt as though I've been left behind by a generation that has traded in verbal communication for technology-based

TRENDS

- The average teen spends more than 72 hours/week using electronic media such as the internet, cell phones, television, music, and video games (some overlap).
- Instant messaging (IMing) is the number one online activity for American girls 8 to 18 (*E-mail is so yesterday!*).
- 45% of teens preferred to communicate with their friends via IM outside of school while only 15% preferred to communicate face-to-face with their friends.
- 16 million teens & younger kids have cell phones (60% of teens).
- More than half (55%) of all online American teens ages 12 to 17 use online social networking sites (i. e. MySpace, Facebook, blog sites).
- One in five kids ages 10 to 17 has been solicited for sex online, and one in 33 has been aggressively solicited where the predator attempted to set up a meeting with the child in person.
- 2/3 of parents in a 2007 survey had never talked with their teens about their MySpace use, and 38% of them had never seen their children's MySpace profile.
- User-generated sites such as "YouTube" (youtube.com with it's good and bad) had only 900,000 viewers in Nov. '05, but increased to 25.5 million within a year.