

# Keep your kids safe: Monitor their cell phones



John Deans

Last week we discussed the serious nature of kids using their cell phone to take and send illicit pictures of themselves which is called "sexting." If you missed last week's column it is available on Deans-Consulting.com and it's worth the read.

Birddogging your child's activity on cell phones and computers is a new requirement of parents but it can be a big hassle and very time consuming. It's almost impractical to go the opposite route by eliminating all access to digital communications to our children and that goes double for teenagers.

Young people these days are tied to computers and smart phones by the time they are in middle school and for sure if they are in high school or driving. They need Internet access for homework and cellular communications to talk with their families.

We cannot just keep them digitally unplugged until they

leave for college since that would leave them grossly unprepared to handle the world's technology.

So basically, our teens are going to have computers and cell phones but we need to keep an eye on them to steer our youngsters away for

trouble. The problem is we cannot stand over their shoulders 24x7. The solution is we fight fire with fire, technology with technology.

Let's start out with basic cellular phones with texting abilities going to younger kid's ages 10 to 16. Giving those eager beavers a cell phone with Internet access and unlimited texting capabilities can be trouble quickly. How can parents remotely monitor who their youngster talks and texts to?

A good solution out there is call "My Mobile Watchdog" at [www.MyMobileWatchdog.com](http://www.MyMobileWatchdog.com) which provides a comprehensive cellular phone monitoring service perfect for concerned parents needing to protect their

young kids from the dangers of today's digital communications.

My Mobile Watchdog is a service which provides a modified Blackberry Pearl cellular phone with specialized software preinstalled on it that performs the monitoring functions. This customized Blackberry communicates with the My Mobile Watchdog service and works with most cellular carriers like AT&T, Verizon and others.

After a \$25 setup charge and a monthly fee of \$9.95 you will be in complete control of your kid's cellular communications. The command center is on the [MyMobileWatchdog.com](http://MyMobileWatchdog.com) Web site when you log into your account. This website provides the parent a comprehensive monitoring capability that is very interactive and timely.

On the Parental Notification Controls page you can set up email/text message addresses where you want alerts sent, turn the notification function on or off, and modify your email and text message addresses to the My Mobile Watchdog monitoring list.

The Authorized Cell Phone

Contact List, which is the core of My Mobile Watchdog, lets you work with your son or daughter to create a master contact list for their cell phone. Only the parents have access to the website to add or make changes.

Under this Authorized Cell Phone Contact List you can set up a contact list with authorized contacts for your son or daughter, include contact phone numbers, email and text addresses as well as other information, and provide an automatic cross-check of all calls, emails, and text messages against the authorized contact list.

The logging and alert capabilities of My Mobile Watchdog can provide immediate alerts of unauthorized activities, automatically log all unauthorized cell phone activity, allow you to view unusual activity on your child's phone by date, status, time, action and detail. With all this information you can then mark a new contact as suspicious or approved.

My Mobile Watchdog is not spyware on a cell phone because it is quite obvious that the phone is being monitored and man-

aged. In fact, every 24 hours an informational message saying just that pops up on the phone requiring an acknowledgement from the young user. That said, the monitoring software is not easily removed or disabled.

If you have a troubled teenager that already has an iPhone or similar smart phone and you need to covertly monitor their communications there is a way to do that. The Web site [www.Mobile-Spy.com](http://www.Mobile-Spy.com) provides secret monitoring of all SMS Text messaging, websites visited, and call log statistics for Apple iPhones, Windows Mobile OS phones, and many other cellular smartphones running the Symbian OS.

This covers over a hundred different makes and models of smart phones and the service works on most every cellular carrier. For as low as \$100 a year, the parent can know everything their kid is doing on their cellular phone.

The way Mobile-Spy works is the parent, after purchasing the service and downloading the software, has to covertly install the Mobile-Spy software onto their kid's smartphone.

I recommend "losing" their phone for a day thereby giving you the time to install it while they are at school. This way if you have any problems you can call the support line for help. Also you can test it out before you "find" their "lost" phone and return it to them that evening.

An easier way is to just install Mobile-Spy when you first buy the cell phone for your kiddo.

After the deed is done and the Mobile-Spy software has been secretly implanted and activated, you can see all the activity on the private account at [www.Mobile-Spy.com](http://www.Mobile-Spy.com). From the Web site you will be able to see each incoming and outgoing number which is logged along with duration and time stamp, every text message logged even if the phone's logs are deleted, each address entered into Internet Explorer, and a summary of all activities along with separate viewers for each type.

A quick daily visit to your monitoring Web site at [www.Mobile-Spy.com](http://www.Mobile-Spy.com) can give you that piece of mind knowing you kid is walking the straight and narrow. You will have the power of knowledge and will no longer be ignorantly blissful. Having this critical information will enable you to be proactive if any problems develop in your kid's life.

You cannot help them if you do not know there is a problem.

Bottom line: To help your kids survive in this digital jungle, utilize these cellular monitoring services to keep them safe.

Next week's column: Magic-Jack.

*John Deans of DeansConsulting.com is a Brenham area computer networking consultant who can be reached at 289-2233 or [John@DeansConsulting.com](mailto:John@DeansConsulting.com) for questions and comments.*