

A CLOSER LOOK



What you see

A new movie sounds fantastic. The advertisement says that the movie's got 5 out of 5 stars:

★★★★★

It quotes film reviewers:
"Action-packed!"
"Hilarious!"

You can hardly wait to see it. But hold on...

What you don't see

Movie ads, like all advertisements, are trying to persuade you to buy something. They are not trying to give you honest advice. They may not be lying, but they don't tell you the whole truth either. Usually, movie reviewers have different

opinions. If two reviewers give it only 3 stars, and one gives it 5 stars, which do you think the advertisement will mention? Yes, the 5-star one. The ad won't tell you about the critics who gave only 3 stars!

What about the words in the ad? Perhaps the critic actually said, "This is an action-packed movie, but the

special effects are horrible." The ad only quoted the words "action-packed"! Another critic may say, "The acting was so bad that it was hilarious!" – and the ad just tells you "hilarious!"

So don't depend on ads to decide what to watch. Read reviews, or ask friends who have seen the movie.

Chat: beware of strangers

want to be my friend? ;)

IT'S EASY TO MEET PEOPLE ON THE INTERNET. IN FACT, IT'S TOO EASY. NOT EVERYONE WHO'S ONLINE CAN BE TRUSTED, NO MATTER HOW FRIENDLY THEY ACT. BUT, DON'T WORRY, YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF BY FOLLOWING A FEW SIMPLE RULES. READ ON...

**GET
MEDIA
SMART**
Strangers
online

The internet has chatrooms that are like playgrounds with lots of kids talking to each other.

But unlike a real playground where everyone's actually there with you, in a chatroom conversation you cannot see or hear the person you're talking to.

That makes it easy for an ill-minded stranger to take advantage of you.

If you were in the canteen talking to your friend about private things, and a stranger sat down next to you, you and your friend would probably walk away to avoid the stranger.

But in a chatroom, strangers can spy on your conversations without you knowing. If they are interested in what you are saying, they may even join the chat.

The stranger may introduce himself, but you won't know if he's telling the truth. It could be an adult pretending to be your age, trying to make friends so that he can hurt you.

For 11 year-old Vanessa, an online chat became a nightmare. Like many other children, Vanessa shared information about herself in a chatroom with her classmate. But a

stranger was lurking, looking at what Vanessa was saying.

Vanessa told her classmate Mariel that she was feeling lonely because her parents were often out, working late. The stranger grabbed this chance to befriend lonely Vanessa. He joined the conversation.

Vanessa started chatting with the stranger because he seemed to understand her loneliness.

One day the stranger asked to meet her at a shopping centre. Vanessa agreed. The stranger, a 32-year-old man, took Vanessa to his house and hurt her by touching her private parts.

Vanessa went home and told her parents what happened. The parents immediately informed the police. Two weeks later the stranger was caught. But poor Vanessa can't forget the horrible experience.

Other kids have taken part in online chats and gotten hurt like Vanessa. But that is not to say that you should never enter a chatroom.

In any playground game, you get hurt if you don't follow the rules. Likewise, in a chatroom you must follow a set of rules so that you can safely enjoy a chat.

STRANGER DANGER: FIVE SIMPLE RULES

Ask adults you trust to check out chatrooms for you first. Good chatrooms have an independent moderator to watch what's being discussed. He's like a watchdog, guarding the chatroom from being contaminated by bad talk.

Do not respond to emails sent to you by strangers. If you have never seen the sender's name before, do not reply without checking first with an adult you trust. Strangers may use interesting titles for their emails like "I Love You", or "I am Missing You". Outsmart them: just click the delete icon and destroy the email.

Don't agree to meet someone you befriended in a chatroom. Nobody trustworthy would ask a child to meet him alone without first asking the parents' permission. If anyone wants to meet you in secret and tells you not to inform your parents, that person is definitely up to no good. No matter how he tries to

convince you, never agree to meet him. You should immediately tell a parent or teacher about the person. The person is probably trying to trick other kids too, and he should be stopped.

Do not reveal information about yourself. Personal information includes things like your full name, age, where you live, what school you attend, and problems at home. Don't give such information in chatrooms. Strangers may be watching. They may use this information to take advantage of you. They may use it to pretend to understand you and care about you, and to figure out where to find you.

Feel uncomfortable? Tell an adult. If you read a message from a stranger that makes you feel yucky or uncomfortable, tell an adult whom you trust. Remember, it's not your fault if you accidentally receive such messages, so don't be afraid to tell an adult.