

Handout 2: On the Internet, Nobody Knows You Are a Dog (Lexile Level 930)



On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog

Part 1

“On the Internet, nobody knows you are a dog” is a funny meme that has been copied and spread across the internet. It started as a cartoon created by Peter Steiner and was published in *The New Yorker* on July 5, 1993

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_the_Internet,_nobody_knows_you%27re_a_dog).

In the cartoon, a dog is sitting on a chair in front of a computer. He is telling another dog, “On the Internet, nobody knows you are a dog.” What do you think he means?

Part 2 - Online Quizzes

When you are on the Internet, you never know whether the cyberstranger is as harmless as a dog or as harmful as the Big Bad Cyberwolf. These cyberwolves try to get personal information from you. For example, your friend sends you a link to a quiz: Which fairy-tale character are you? Should you take the quiz? The quiz asks questions about your favorite food, toys, sports, and computer games. It also asks for your name, address, and email address. What are the risks of taking the quiz?

Part 3 - Risks of Sharing Information

Sharing private information like your name, address, phone number and email can be very risky. Believe it or not, it can also be risky if you share personal information about your favorite things. Did you know that quiz creators often sell your personal information to companies? Companies use the information you provide (for example, "I love to play with American Girl Dolls.") They will start sending emails about products they think you will like. They will also use the information to place advertisements about your favorite things on websites you visit. In addition, if you share personal information with cyberstrangers, they may use the information to try to meet you. What if a wolf showed up dressed in your favorite sports team's clothing? What are the risks of sharing information?

Part 4 - Online Contests

Entering online contests can also be risky. For example, recently Red and Jack were playing an online game and a contest popped up. The contest asked:

- i. Do you like to send text messages?
- ii. Have you ever played on an online game or app?
- iii. Have you ever entered a contest online?
- iv. Form for the contest:
 - Email:
 - Name:
 - Where do you go to school?
 - Are you a boy or a girl?
 - Age:
 - Phone number:
 - Favorite TV show:
 - Favorite app:
 - Favorite singer:

Should they enter the contest? Why or why not?

What information is very risky to share? What information can be risky? Why?

Part 5 - Information from Contests and Surveys

Did you ever think there might be cyberwolves reading the answers you give on surveys and online contests? Contests can collect your information to sell to other companies. Why would other companies want this information? So they can try to sell YOU things. For example, after Red entered the contest, she received emails asking her to buy apps. Then, Jack received a message to fill in a survey with these questions:

- What is your mother’s name?
- How old are you?
- What is your favorite snack?
- Do you live in a house or an apartment?
- What kind of car do your parents drive?

What information could a company find out about someone who answers these questions?

Part 6 – Online Profiles

Many apps ask you to complete profiles. Red asked her mom if she could fill in a profile on an app. The profile asked for her name, age, address, and school. It also asked for her favorite food, sports teams, and music. She filled in all of the information. What are the risks of giving out so much personal information?

After she filled in the profile, she received a friend request from Funny Bunny. What should she do?
