

## ***CyberSafe with Steve Dotto*** **Media Backgrounder**

### **Context:**

Today's children and students are exposed to dangers that may not be completely new, but are much closer than they used to be. They are growing up in a world in which technology mediates so much of their communication. These digital natives are comfortable in their online environment. Many parents and educators do not have this same type of facility with technology. While they are concerned about issues related to cyber safety many feel out of their element and unable to engage with children around this issue since, in many instances children often know more than they do: it becomes difficult for them to assume the traditional "parent-expert" or "teacher-expert" role.

In addition to concerns about things like cyber-bullies and predators, there are broader issues to consider. Children and young people are engaging in actions online that can have lifelong consequences. For example, by posting their personal photos, videos and comments without thought to long term consequences, our children are potentially jeopardizing, and, in some instances, limiting future choices. Consider a teenager who posts a video of himself taking an illegal substance. He may view this as an opportunity to share an incident in his life with his online community. The reality is, this choice may well preclude him from ever having a career in law enforcement or teaching. It could also jeopardize his academic career when post-secondary institutions are selecting potential students. The long range consequences are not yet known. And, if parents and educators are not aware of what children do in online spaces they cannot guide and support them.

Education is the best defense – not just for children but for their parents and teachers, too.

### **Opportunity:**

*CyberSafe with Steve Dotto* is an interactive workshop designed to educate parents, caregivers and teachers about the potential dangers of the Internet and to provide them with some tools to support and protect their children.

Media personality and technology expert Steve Dotto has worked with the Virtual School Society to develop this workshop, which teaches why it's important for

parents to engage, what the dangers are, where the opportunities are, how to take the first steps, and what to do when there's cause for concern.

Participants will learn about social networking websites and how they are used by children. They'll become familiar with cyber risks like security, privacy, fraud, malicious intent, abuse, predators, bullying, and bad judgment. Finally, they'll be shown how to implement best practices that can make a difference.

**About Steve Dotto:**

Steve Dotto is host and executive producer of *Dotto Tech*, seen across the country through the CHUM network (CityTV and A Channel in BC) and Knowledge Network in BC. *Dotto Tech* is a "how to" technology show teaching Canadians how to get more out of their computers and digital devices.

It follows on the heels of Steve's very popular previous series, *Dotto on Data* and *Dotto's Data Café*, which ran for 12 seasons on Canada's educational networks to an annual audience of over 20 million viewers. Steve Dotto has been a very active member of the high-tech industry for over 15 years. His industry experience includes stints in management with both a multimedia distribution company and a software manufacturer.

***CyberSafe with Steve Dotto* in (name of your community):**

(day, date and time)

(location and address)

**For more information please contact:**

(your name, phone number and e-mail address)