

# Cop reaches students about Internet safety



Staff Sgt. Darren Laur with Victoria police, presented an assembly on Internet safety to Ladysmith Secondary School students. The presentation included how to stay safe on the web and while social networking and sexting.

*Erin DeCoste photo*

[Buy Ladysmith Chronicle Photos Online](#)

By [Erin DeCoste - Ladysmith Chronicle](#)

Published: **October 25, 2010 5:00 PM**

The students sat in silence listening to the police officer at the front of the school gymnasium.

Their rapt attention was directed at Staff Sgt. Darren Laur of the Victoria police department who was speaking about Internet safety.

“Words cannot only hurt, but they can kill,” he told the group of Ladysmith Secondary School students.

The Internet Safety presentation was a way of reaching teenagers — the digital citizens of the World Wide Web — and teaching them how to be safe online.

Laur, co-owner of Personal Protection Services Inc., isn't trying to scare the teens away from the Net.

"I encourage you to stay online but be careful of your digital footprint because it can come back and kick you," he said.

Laur is talking about inappropriate photos, cyber bullying and sexting.

Sexting is using mobile phones to send sexual text messages or images.

The presentation included videos of real life consequences.

One video was about teenagers who committed suicide after being cyber bullied.

Laur explained how it's hard for adults to reach youth about this topic.

"It's unusual for them to have someone like me talk to them about this," he said.

But the message seems to be working.

Mike van Deventer, a Grade 12 student, said he was surprised by the presentation.

"I thought it was pretty shocking how easy people can get information," he said.

Karrisa Scott, a Grade 10 student, said, "You would think privacy settings were more private."

Laur said one way he is able to keep the students' attentions for the full presentation is his ability to connect to the youth.

"They're so interested and enmeshed in this that it's easy to present," he said.

But Laur is realistic.

"There's always going to be some who ignore the message," he said. "But if I can make the difference in one person than my job is done."

The Internet safety presentation was Thursday, Oct. 22. There were two assemblies. Grades 10 to 12 at 10 a.m. and Grades 8 and 9 at 1 p.m. A parents' session was held 7 to 9 p.m. the same day.