



Delbert Scott  
28<sup>th</sup> Senate District

MISSOURI SENATE  
JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 416  
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of Oct. 20, 2008**

**Contact: Debbie Poire  
(573) 751-8793**

## October Is Cyber Security Awareness Month

---

As our society grows more familiar with the Internet and everything it provides for those surfing the World Wide Web, so grow the dangers that lurk on the other end of your connection. When the concept of the Internet was first created, developers had no idea how widespread their invention would become.

The Internet was first developed in the late 1960s as an experimental project of the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA). The Internet, which was first known as ARPANET, was a series of linked computers and computer networks owned by the military, defense contractors, and university laboratories charged with conducting defense-related research. This network enabled researchers across our country to access files and documents directly — shortening the gap in time it used to take to share vital information. As this new form of communication evolved far beyond the research setting in the United States, ARPANET became popular among universities, corporations, and individuals around the world and soon ARPANET became the Internet.

It's nearly impossible to predict the actual number of people using the Internet today. However, it is a known fact that the Internet has experienced immense growth in the last decade. In the early 1980s, only a few hundred computers were linked to the Internet, and by the early 1990s, the number stood around 100,000 computers. In just a few years, the number jumped to more than 1 million computers. This number grows every day. More than 165 countries are connected to the Internet, and it is estimated that approximately 47.5 million people use the Internet in the U.S. alone.

With this many people connected to the World Wide Web, lawmakers in the General Assembly have made browsing the Internet safer for our most vulnerable users — our children. As a member of the Missouri Senate, I helped pass legislation this year to protect children from those who might prey upon them while using the Internet.

[Senate Bill 818](#) makes online harassment a crime in Missouri. The legislation expands stalking and harassment laws to include Web-related and other electronic communication and strengthens the penalties

for committing the crime. Additionally, Senate Bill 818 requires school boards to add stalking and harassment to the list of crimes they must report to law enforcement.

Missouri also now provides more buffers and protections for children against Internet predators and child pornographers as well as tougher penalties for child pornography and other sex crimes against children with the enactment of [Senate Bill 714](#). Missouri is now one of the toughest states in the nation in fighting these kinds of crimes against our children.

The Internet provides a great tool for citizens to communicate with family and friends, students to enhance their education, and business men and women to grow their companies. It also allows us to search for helpful information we might not be able to find anywhere else. With all of this information at our fingertips, it makes sense to ensure that users are aware of those who might not have the best intentions on the World Wide Web. Cyber Security Awareness Month provides citizens in our state the chance to familiarize themselves with the Internet as well as raise public awareness about cyber security.

For more information on the Internet protection measures listed above, visit [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) and enter the bill numbers [SB 818](#) and [SB 714](#) into the legislation search field. And if you have questions or comments about any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.mo.gov](mailto:delbertscott@senate.mo.gov).

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*

