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### **MEN ARE THE BIGGEST ONLINE GOSSIPS**

The internet has created a nation of gossips, with 8 out of 10 people prepared to reveal more personal information on-line, than they would face to face.

More than half of the men questioned by Geek Squad – the 24 hour technology support service – admitted to rumour mongering online by sharing defamatory information about their managers, other people’s love lives and unsubstantiated work gossip, without a thought for the potential consequences.

The social media explosion has resulted in more people sharing ever more personal information about themselves and others. Half of the people questioned said they would prefer to boast online than face to face, and a quarter are happier to post private information about themselves than say it in person.

“Social media has the potential to be anti-social,” says Geek Squad agent David Greaves. “A wrongly worded message can cause as much grief as a traditional computer hacker trying to copy your personal information. Don’t place personal details in the open for cyber thefts.”

More people are placing their personal safety at risk by not protecting their on-line profiles or revealing personal details in their messages. Fifty-nine per cent of under 18s are prepared to reveal their address, mobile number and whereabouts online. One third of the people surveyed by Geek Squad admitted they don’t have the correct security settings on their social networking pages, leaving any information they publish open to online strangers.

Ann Elledge, Director of Personal Safety, Suzy Lamplugh Trust commented: “The internet is a wonderful tool but it is always important to remember that when using social networking sites, people may not be who they seem. Always take care to protect your personal safety.”

**Other findings of interest:**

- Half of all women surveyed say the thing they dread most is seeing an unflattering photograph of themselves online
- 56% of under 18s fear seeing rumours or details about their love lives online more than anything else
- A fifth of men would prefer to say 'I love you' to their partner online rather than face to face
- Twice as many men than women would spread a rumour online
- Nearly 40% of men would be happy to meet with a celebrity or stranger after an online invitation

**Notes to Editors:**

Statistics collated from One Poll research of 3,000 UK respondents, November 2009

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