A TEEN'S GUIDE TO BUILDING SMART CYBER HABITS
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Brian Contos: Welcome to the Cybersecurity Effectiveness Podcast, sponsored by Verodin. The Verodin Security Instrumentation Platform is the only business platform for security that helps you manage, measure, improve, and communicate security effectiveness. I'm your host, Brian Contos, and we've got a really special guest today. Joining me today is actually my daughter, Athena Contos. Welcome to the podcast, Athena.

Athena Contos: Hi, it's great to be here.

Brian Contos: Athena, I know your entire life you've been wanting to be on this podcast. So, is this a dream come true?

Athena Contos: Not really.

Brian Contos: So, Athena, tell everybody a little bit about you.

Athena Contos: Okay. I'm 12-years-old. I am in seventh grade. I do fencing and I have a really derpy German Shepherd named Baxter.

Brian Contos: Why is he derpy?

Athena Contos: Because he's got floppy ears and he's really short and he's kinda fat.

Brian Contos: He's not that fat. Well, anyways, we're here to talk about cyberbullying. I figured what better than somebody that's a seventh grader, that sees this type of thing firsthand. So, you're certainly our youngest guest, but let's just jump into it. You know, what is cyberbullying from your perspective, Athena?

Athena Contos: So, cyberbullying is using technology like texting or email and social media to anonymously and repeatedly attack someone else.

Brian Contos: Okay, so how is that different than just kind of regular bullying then?

Athena Contos: Well, it's through technology and the bully can hide their identity, so it's much easier for them to do what they want to do.

Brian Contos: So, when you say hide their identity, what do you mean exactly by that?

Athena Contos: Because they can use an account that's not their real name. So, they can't get punished for it because it's not directly linked with them, with their name.

Brian Contos: Yeah, and you think some of these cyberbullies are probably young people and older people? I guess you could be a cyberbully at any age, right?

Athena Contos: Yeah. Some people will pretend to be other people so that they can get to your account.

Brian Contos: So, what are some of the signs that someone is being cyberbullied, maybe one of your friends or a brother or sister or something like that?

Athena Contos: Well, they might try to hide their screen when they're around other people and they avoid social situations. Even some that they might use to enjoy.

Brian Contos: So, if you're sitting there and you're on your phone and I'm trying to look over your shoulder and you're hiding it, should I assume you're being cyberbullied or you just don't want me to look at your phone?

Athena Contos: Well, it could be that but it could also be a warning that something might also be going on.

Brian Contos: Yeah, that's a good sign. So, what do you do if you know somebody that is being cyberbullied? What are some of the steps that you could take as a friend or a family member?

Athena Contos: Well, of course, you could try to stop the bullying, but that doesn't always work. So, you can also support the person who is being bullied by listening to them about what you can do.

Brian Contos: So, from that perspective, it's a lot of it's like when they're dealing with a regular bully, sometimes just being a shoulder to cry on if you will, and maybe just hear what they have to say.

Athena Contos: Yeah.

Brian Contos: So, what can people do to prevent cyberbullying?

Athena Contos: Well, first off, you shouldn't share your passwords to your phone or any of your account, even to your friends because they might tell other people. And try to have a private social media, so that only people that you know accept your follow requests.

Brian Contos: Yeah, I know that's a big deal with a lot of people, let's say on Instagram they might have thousands or if you're more popular, millions of followers, right. But I think especially young people like you, you're in seventh grade, probably having thousands and thousands of followers unless that's your job is probably not the best thing 'cause you have no idea who's behind that account do you?

Athena Contos: Yeah, and they can all just access your pictures.

Brian Contos: And they can basically see everything you've got, right?

Athena Contos: Yeah.

Brian Contos: And I guess one of the things about cyber, we were talking about this the other day, or digital media, if you send somebody a text with an image or an email or you post something, even if you delete it later on, it's there forever, right?

Athena Contos: Yeah.

Brian Contos: I mean, when you're applying for a job or applying to college or maybe your coach sees it or something like that, so everything you post, you want to make sure this is something that you're absolutely 100% comfortable with in perpetuity. So, what do we do if you're in a situation, you're getting bullied, what's a step that you can take if you're sort of the recipient of this bullying?

Athena Contos: Well, you should try to ignore the bully because they're probably just doing it for attention, or you could block the bully on the website. and make sure you screenshot the messages, so if it does escalate, you have proof. And you should also try to reach out to a parent or an adult so that they can be aware of the situation.

Brian Contos: Yeah, that's a good point, right. Keep the evidence and just store it away, just in case something bad happens, you never know, right? You never know what could occur or if it gets so bad that maybe even law enforcement needs to be involved. You want to certainly make sure you have a record of that, depending on the gravity of the situation. I know, Athena, as a seventh grader, and I'm sure a lot of school kids have stories that they could share probably at all ages actually. You had mentioned a while ago there was actually a couple of stories that you wanted to share of some cyberbullying that you had seen. If you could share some of those, that would be great.

Athena Contos: Yeah, of course. So, one of my stories is when my friend, she first got Instagram and she was super excited, so she let the entire school follow her. But then one of her friends, she thought it'd be funny to share a bunch of her embarrassing pictures on her account and then tagging her so that everyone that followed her

could see the pictures on her page. But then my friend said that this was not okay, so she had to report that account and have it shut down.

Brian Contos: Wow. Wow. And that's the things you do in the cyber world can have ramifications on your relationship in real life, right? I mean maybe those two people weren't friends after this and maybe it was intentionally meant to be mean or maybe it wasn't, but the way it's interpreted, right? You never know how people react to that. You said you had another story as well?

Athena Contos: Yeah, so my friend, she got a message from someone she didn't know and it said that someone stole her pictures and was putting it on a different website and they should click the link to see what would happen. So, she clicked the link and she had to put in her username and password to her social media account to see what her pictures were doing on a different website. But then when she put in her username and password nothing happened, so then she was like, "Oh, okay. It was probably nothing," but then that someone else had her username and password, they would use it, her account, to send her followers the same message. And after she noticed what was happening, she had to delete her account to get a new one so no one else would get the messages.

Brian Contos: Wow. So, they just did it to steal her credentials basically and take over her account and then use that to do malicious things. Yeah, we definitely see that in Enterprise Security all the time, as well. Well, those were really good stories. So let's talk about some tips, right? So, what kind of tips do you have for kids out there? What should they do if they're in one of these situations?

Athena Contos: Well, first off, like I said before, don't let anyone take your passwords, even your friends, because they might do other things with your account. And you should also if you are getting bullied, you need to tell someone else about it and don't just keep it to yourself, and only post photos that you would let your parents or principal or any college, they would be okay with that picture.

Brian Contos: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's really good advice. You hear a lot of sad stories about that. And what about parents? What are maybe a couple of things parents should do?

Athena Contos: Well, they should really let their kids be aware of cyberbullying and things that can happen online and to make sure that they're staying safe. But something else that the parent can do is they can personally make an account on social media so that they can follow their child and see what they're posting.

Brian Contos: Yeah, yeah, that's very good advice I think. Well, Athena, I know you're a big fan of the podcast and you listen to all of them. So, you know, this question's coming up, but who is your favorite superhero or super villain and why?

Athena Contos:	I would probably say Captain Marvel because she's really strong and she's a really good female character and she has a lot of superpowers, and I think they're really cool.
Brian Contos:	So, what did you think? Did you like long haired Captain Marvel in her self-titled movie or did you like short-haired Captain Marvel in Endgame?
Athena Contos:	Well, to be honest, I like them both and if she can kick butt, either way, I think it's okay.
Brian Contos:	Yeah, good answer. And I think she did kick butt either way. So thanks, Athena. And thanks for our listeners for joining and be sure to check out other Cybersecurity Effectiveness Podcasts, sponsored by Verodin.