

## **Information for Parents**

### **Why Should My Children Take Part in the Packet Riders or Hacker Busters?**

1. They'll enjoy it.
2. They'll gain an understanding of how the Internet works.
3. They'll learn the basics of outwitting computer viruses and hackers.
4. They'll be encouraged to use their computer expertise to help others.
5. They'll get a great foundation in networking and computer technologies, which could help them with future educational and career opportunities as well as tests like the Information and Communications Technology Assessment given by the Educational Testing Service.

### **The Packet Riders and Hacker Busters for Middle School Students Helping Students Understand the Internet and How It Works**

Most likely, when your middle school-aged children want to find information, they look on the Internet. If they want to communicate with a friend, they head to the keyboard. The Internet is a central part of their world and they feel comfortable using it. However, if they are like most middle school students, they don't worry about whether or not a game they download has a virus that will infect their computer, or if a hacker can gain access to credit card numbers; or if the people they meet online are not who they claim to be.

To use the Internet safely and responsibly, your children should know the basics of how it works. You may believe that your children know everything they need to know about technologies, but many children can benefit from a greater understanding. They may know how to use computers, but their knowledge is usually quite limited. For example they might not know (1) how email, the Internet, and computer programs work, (2) how hackers and viruses can affect them, (3) how computers can be used to help others, and (4) how to be safe online.

This Cisco package is designed to help fill the gaps in their understanding. It delivers valuable information in an engaging format to help children understand the Internet, while providing a background in technology that may encourage them to pursue additional knowledge in the realm of networking and computer technologies.

This project began when an executive at Cisco asked programmers to create something interesting for her daughter to do when she came to work with Mom on "Bring Your Daughter to Work Day." The result was a dynamic learning adventure in video game format that intrigued the executive's daughter and all the other girls in attendance. The game, *Peter Packet*, taught students about the Internet as they made their way through its challenges.

Students in Cisco Networking Academies in middle schools, high schools, and colleges tested the product next. These students were adept at technologies and were interested in careers in the field. When asked to evaluate the game, students said they wished they had the opportunity to use it when they started their training because it gave them an overall understanding of what computers and networks were all about. Besides that, it was fun.

The game was so well received that Cisco decided to create sites where students could tackle the Peter Packet game and other games and activities. These sites, which are the Packet Riders for ages 9-11 and the Hacker Busters for ages 12-14, feature exciting learning experiences for middle school students with any level of computer expertise. The games and activities are designed to be equally appealing to girls as they are to boys by emphasizing how technologies are used to help people throughout the world.

Before you recommend the Packet Riders or Hacker Busters to your children, you may want to take your own tour through the site. You can try out the games and browse through the activities. While you are on the site, you can also register your children for the Packet Riders or Hacker Busters news. If you do, they'll receive newsletters featuring activities that are available on the Hacker Busters or Packet Riders sites.

[Route to the Packeteers <Packet Riders>](#)

[Route to the Hacker Busters <Hacker Busters>](#)