**United States Special Operations Command**

**Identity Management for Families**



**Things All Parents Need to**

**Know**

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[**Site****s and Apps Kids Are Heading to After Facebook**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook)

20 September 2013

Next-generation apps that let users text, video chat, shop, date and share their pics and videos are attracting teens like catnip. The days of a one-stop shop for all social networking needs are over. Instead, teens are dividing their attention between an array of apps and tools that let them write, share, video chat, and even shop for the latest trends. You don't need to know the ins and outs of every app and site that's "hot" right now (and frankly, if you did, they wouldn't be trendy anymore). But knowing the basics -- what they are, why they're popular, and the problems that can crop up when they're not used responsibly -- can make the difference between a positive and negative experience for your kid.

**Social Media Tools Parents Need to Know About Now**

**[Twitter](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook%22%20%5Cl%20%22Twitter)****[Instagram](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook%22%20%5Cl%20%22Instagram)**[**Snapchat**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Snapchat)[**Tumblr**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Tumblr)[**Google+**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Google+)[**Vine**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Vine)

**Wanelo**[**Kik Messenger**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Kik Messenger)[**Ooovoo**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Oovoo)[**Pheed**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Pheed)[**Ask.fm**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook#Ask.fm)

**The Whisper App**

**Meetme**

**1.** [**Twitter**](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/twitter)is a microblogging site that allows users to post brief, 140-character messages -- called "tweets" -- and follow other users' activities.

**Why it's popular**
Teens like using it to share quick tidbits about their lives with friends. It's also great for keeping up with what's going on in the world -- breaking news, celebrity gossip, etc.

**What parents need to know**

**Public tweets are the norm** **for teens.** Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, most teens report having public accounts ([Pew Internet & American Life Project](http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Teens-Social-Media-And-Privacy.aspx), 2013). Talk to your kids about what they post and how a post can spread far and fast.

**Updates appear immediately**. Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone. This can get kids in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.

**It's a promotional tool for celebs.** Twitter reels teens in with behind-the-scenes access to celebrities' lives, adding a whole new dimension to celebrity worship. You may want to point out how much marketing strategy goes into the tweets of those they admire.

**2.** **[Instagram](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/mobile-app-reviews/instagram)** is a platform that lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos -- either publicly or with a network of followers.

**Why it's popular**
Instagram unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. Instagram also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high quality and artistic.

**What parents need to know**

**Teens are on the lookout for "Likes."** Similar to Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens post it to validate their popularity.

**Public photos are the default.** Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public and may have location information unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a teen's followers.

**Mature content can slip in.** The terms of service specify that users should be at least 13 years old and shouldn't post partially nude or sexually suggestive photos -- but they don't address violence, swear words, or drugs.

**3.** **[Snapchat](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/mobile-app-reviews/snapchat)** isa messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear.

**Why it's popular**
Snapchat's creators intended the app's fleeting images to be a way for teens to share fun, light moments without the risk of having them go public. And that's what most teens use it for: sending goofy or embarrassing photos to one another. Snapchats also seem to send and load much "faster" than email or text.

**What parents need to know**

**Many schools have yet to block it**, which is one reason why teens like it so much ([Pew Internet & American Life Project](http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Teens-Social-Media-And-Privacy.aspx), 2013).

**It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered.

**It can make sexting seem OK.** The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing inappropriate content.

**4.** **[Tumblr](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/tumblr)** is like a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or videos and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblelogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if made public).

**Why it's popular**
Many teens have tumblrs for personal use -- sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends. Tumblelogs with funny memes and gifs often go viral online, as well (case in point: "[Texts from Hillary](http://textsfromhillaryclinton.tumblr.com/)").

**What parents need to know**

**Porn is easy to find.** This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos, depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.

**Privacy can be guarded, but only through an awkward workaround**. The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the Internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a *second* profile, which they're able to password protect.

**Posts are often copied and shared.** Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post that's reblogged from one tumblelog then appears on another. Many teens like -- and in fact, want -- their posts reblogged. But do you really want your kids' words and photos on someone else's page?

**5.** **[Google+](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/google)** is Google's social network, which is now open to teens. It has attempted to improve on [Facebook's friend concept](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/facebook) -- using "circles" that give users more control about what they share with whom.

**Why it's popular**
Teens aren't wild about Google+ yet. But many feel that their parents are more accepting of it because they associate it with schoolwork. One popular aspect of Google+ is the addition of real-time [video chats in Hangouts](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/google-hangouts) (virtual gatherings with approved friends).

**What parents need to know**

**Teens can limit who sees certain posts by using "circles."** Friends, acquaintances, and the general public can all be placed in different circles. If you're friends with your kid on Google+, know that you may be in a different "circle" than their friends (and therefore seeing different information).

**Google+ takes teens' safety seriously.** Google+ created age-appropriate privacy default settings for any users whose registration information shows them to be teens. It also automatically reminds them about who may be seeing their posts (if they're posting on public or extended circles).

**Data tracking and targeting are concerns.** Google+ activity (what you post and search for and who you connect with) is shared across Google services including Gmail and YouTube. This information is used for targeting ads to the user. Users can't opt out of this type of sharing across Google services.

**6.** **[Vine](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/mobile-app-reviews/vine)** is a social media app that lets users post and watch looping six-second video clips. This Twitter-owned service has developed a unique community of people who post videos that are often creative and funny -- and sometimes thought-provoking.

**Why it's popular**
Videos run the gamut from stop-motion clips of puzzles doing and undoing themselves to six-second skits showing how a teen wakes up on a school day vs. a day during summer. Teens usually use Vine to create and share silly videos of themselves and/or their friends and family.

**What parents need to know**

**It's full of inappropriate videos.** In three minutes of random searching, we came across a clip full of full-frontal male nudity, a woman in a fishnet shirt with her breasts exposed, and people blowing marijuana smoke into each other's mouths. There's a lot of funny, clever expression on Vine, but much of it isn't appropriate for kids.

**There are significant privacy concerns.** The videos you post, the accounts you follow, and the comments you make on videos are all public by default. But you *can* adjust your settings to protect your posts; only followers will see them, and you have to approve new followers.

**Parents can be star performers (without knowing).** If your teens film you being goofy or silly, you may want to talk about whether they plan to share it.

**7.** **Wanelo** (Want, Need, Love) combines shopping, fashion blogging, and social networking all in one. It's very popular among teens, allowing them to discover, share, and buy products they like.

**Why it's popular**
Teens keep up with the latest styles by browsing Wanelo's "trending" feed, which aggregates the items that are most popular across the site. They can also cultivate their own style through the "My Feed" function, which displays content from the users, brands, and stores they follow.

**What parents need to know**

**If you like it, you can buy it.** Users can purchase almost anything they see on Wanelo by clicking through to products' original sites. As one user tweeted, "#Wanelo you can have all of my money! #obsessed."

**Brand names are prominent.** Upon registering, users are required to follow at least three "stores" (for example, Forever21 or Marc Jacobs) and at least three "people" (many are other everyday people in Wanelo's network, but there are also publications like *Seventeen* magazine).

**There's plenty of mature clothing**. You may not love what kids find and put on their wish lists. Wanelo could lead to even more arguments over what your teen can and can't wear.

**8.** **[Kik Messenger](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/mobile-app-reviews/kik-messenger)** is an app-based alternative to standard texting that kids use for social networking. It's free to use but has lots of ads.

**Why it's popular**
It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you just use the basic features, making it decidedly more fun in many ways than SMS texting.

**What parents need to know**

**It's too easy to "copy all."** Kik's ability to link to other Kik-enabled apps within itself is a way to drive "app adoption" (purchases) from its users for developers. The app also encourages new registrants to invite everyone in their phone's address book to join Kik, since users can only message those who also have the app.

**There's some stranger danger.** An app named *OinkText*, linked to Kik, allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. There's also a Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screenshots of messages (sometimes displaying users' full names) to contests.

**It uses real names.** Teens' usernames identify them on Kik, so they shouldn't use their full real name as their username.

**9.** **Oovoo** is a free video, voice, and messaging app. Users can have group chats with up to 12 people for free. (The premium version removes ads from the service.)

**Why it's popular**
Teens mostly use Oovoo to hang out with friends. Many log on after school and keep it up while doing homework. Oovoo can be great for group studying and it makes it easy for kids to receive "face to face" homework help from classmates.

**What parents need to know**

**You can only chat with approved friends.** Users can only communicate with those on their approved "contact list," which can help ease parents' safety concerns.

**It can be distracting**. Because the service makes video chatting so affordable and accessible, it can also be addicting. [A conversation with your kids about multitasking](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/how-do-i-stop-my-kids-from-multitasking) may be in order.

**Kids still prefer in-person communication.** Though apps like Oovoo make it easier than ever to video chat with friends, [research shows that kids still value face-to-face conversations over online ones](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/social-media-social-life) -- especially when it comes to sensitive topics. Still, they sometimes find it hard to log off when all of their friends are on.

**10.** **Pheed** is best described as a hybrid of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube -- except that you can require others to pay a premium to access your personal channel.

**Why it's popular**
Pheed*'*s multimedia "all in one" offering seems to be capturing teens' attention the most. Some teens also like the fact that they have more control over ownership and copyright, since Pheed allows its users to watermark their original content.

**What parents need to know**

**It's hot!** According to Forbes, Pheed has swiftly become the No. 1 free social app in the App Store, thanks in large part to teens. Time will tell whether artists and celebrities will jump on the bandwagon and start using Pheed to promote themselves and charge their fans to view what they post.

**Users can make money.** Users can charge others a subscription fee to access their content, ranging from $1.99 to $34.99 per view, or the same price range per month. Note that a cut of all proceeds goes to Pheed.

**Privacy updates are in the works.** Kids should be aware that their posts are currently public by default and therefore searchable online.

**11.** **[Ask.fm](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/website-reviews/askfm)** is a social site that lets kids ask questions and answer those posted by other users -- sometimes anonymously.

**Why it's popular**
Although there are some friendly interactions on Ask.fm -- Q&As about favorite foods or crushes, for example -- there are lots of mean comments and some creepy sexual posts. This iffy content is part of the site's appeal for teens.

**What parents need to know**

**Bullying is a major concern.** [The British news website MailOnline reported that the site has been linked to the suicides of several teens](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/the-death-of-rebecca-sedwick-and-cyberbullying-the-need-to-do-more). [Talk to your teens about cyberbullying](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/cyberbullying) and how anonymity can encourage mean behavior.

**Anonymous answers are optional.** Users can decide whether to allow anonymous posts and can remove their answers from streaming to decrease their profile's visibility. If your teens do use the site, they'd be best turning off anonymous answers and keeping themselves out of the live stream.

**Q&As can appear on Facebook.** Syncing with Facebook means that a much wider audience can see those Q&As.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-sites-and-apps-kids-are-heading-to-after-facebook>

**12. The Whisper App** is the Teen Confession App.

**Why it’s popular**

It allows users to superimpose text over a picture. The secret sauce is that users are anonymous thus allowing for secrets to be posted. Over 70% of whisper users are women under the age of 25. Whisper provides freedom for young users to share raw feelings and emotions over simple pictures.

**Why You Should Monitor It**

Teens have started using the app for cyberbullying. Due to the anonymous feature of the app, teens are posting pics of other teens with derogatory text superimposed on the image. Users do not have to register to use Whisper thus no user profile. Unfortunately, the app allow users to communicate with other users nearby by using the device GPS location settings. Pedophiles seek out female whisper users to establish a relationship. Recently, a Seattle, Washington man was arrested for raping a 12 year old girl that was lured to a hotel through the app.

<http://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/4-apps-teen-love-that-parents-need-to-monitor-kerj/>

**13. Meetme.com**

One site that is gaining in popularity amongst teens is Meetme.com. Meetme.com formerly known as Myyearbook.com claims to have 90 million members and is described as a “social networking site for teens.” One important features of meetme.com that cause me to pause is that the social network recommends people to connect with based on where the child lives. A recent poll in Florida found 314 sexual predators within a 5-mile radius of a specific zip code. Some Meetme.com members have live webcams, where predators reportedly solicit videos and photos. “It’s terrifying. Unfortunately teens sometimes feel they are invincible and will offer too much information online, which provides predators with a direct line to them.

<http://www.marlinpage.com/2013/meetme-com-is-it-a-playground-for-predators-keeping-children-safe-on-the-internet/>

**14. Location based dating apps: Bendr, Grindr, Blendr, Tinder, locals, OkCupid, Sonar.me, Skout, MeetMoi, Brightkite, SinglesAroundMe, etc.**

Geosocial networking application and social discovery platforms. These are mobile applications that connect people with others in their geographic proximity, often in real-time. Popular examples include Tinder, Grindr (and its counterpart, Blendr), and SinglesAroundMe. The apps are largely photo based, and offer an opportunity for serendipitous meet-ups, in which users can potentially find love, sex, or general companionship. The intersection of hook-up culture and location-based technologies set the stage for some tangibly unsafe interactions.

<http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2014/03/25/some-thoughts-on-location-based-dating-apps/>

As all of the above popular apps get old (or discovered by parents) new ones are coming out rapidly. Any teen can do a google search to find the newest app or how to hide apps from parents. Some teens are even writing script to hide apps and sharing the “how to” on the open web or YouTube which can be found with just a simple google search. For example: <http://www.tuaw.com/2014/03/26/how-to-completely-hide-any-app-or-folder-on-your-iphone-or-ipad/>

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[**7 dangerous Apps that parents need to know about**](http://www.checkupnewsroom.com/7-dangerous-apps-that-parents-need-to-know-about/)

16 April 2014

**•Yik Yak –** This App is one of the newest and one of the most dangerous. It allows users to post text-only Yaks of up to 200 characters. The messages can be viewed by the 500 Yakkers who are closest to the person who wrote the Yak, as determined by GPS tracking. Users are exposed to – and contributing -sexually explicit content, abusive language and personal attacks so severe that schools are starting to block the App on their Wi-Fi. Although the posts are anonymous, kids start revealing personal information as they get more comfortable with other users.

**•SnapChat –** This App allows users to send photos that will disappear after 10 seconds. Once the recipient opens the picture, the timer starts. Then it’s gone. From both the sender's phone and the recipient’s phone. However, the recipient can take a screen shot of the photo and have it to share with others. This App enables kids to feel more comfortable “sexting” with peers.

**•KiK Messenger –** This is a private messenger app and is coveted by those under 18 for a number of reasons. The App allows kids to send private messages that their parents can’t see. There is very little you can do to verify the identity of someone on Kik, which obviously poses the risk of sexual predators chatting with your child. And again, this is an easy tool for sexting.

**•Poof –**The Poof App allows users to make Apps disappear on their phone with one touch. Kids can hide every app they don’t want you to see on their phone. All they have to do is open the App and select the ones they don’t want you to see. Very scary! The good news about this App is it is no longer available, which isn't uncommon for these types of Apps. But, if it was downloaded before it was deleted from the App store, your child may still have it. Keep in mind that Apps like this are created and then terminated pretty quickly by Android and Apple stores, but there are similar ones being created constantly. Some other names include: Hidden Apps, App Lock and Hide It Pro.

**•Omegle –** This App has been around since 2008, with video chat added in 2009. When you use Omegle you do not identify yourself through the service – chat participants are only identified as “You” and “Stranger”. You don't have to register for the App. However, you can connect Omegle to your Facebook account to find chat partners with similar interests. When choosing this feature, an Omegle Facebook App will receive your Facebook “likes” and try to match you with a stranger with similar likes. This is not okay for children. There is a high risk of sexual predators and you don’t want your kids giving out their personal information, much less even talking to strangers.

Additionally, Five reasons not to use Omegle <http://www.bewebsmart.com/internet-safety/what-is-omegle-is-it-okay-for-kids/>

**•Whisper –** This is a meeting App that encourages users to post secrets. You post anonymously, but it displays the area you are posting from. You can search for users posting within a mile from you. A quick look at the App and you can see that online relationships are forming constantly on this App, but you never know the person behind the computer or phone. One man in Washington was convicted of raping a 12-year-old girl he met on this App just last year.

•**Down –** This application, which used to be called “Bang with Friends,” is connected to Facebook. Users can categorize their Facebook friends in one of two ways: they can indicate whether or not a friend is someone they'd like to hang with or someone they are "down" to hook up with. The slogan for the App: “The anonymous, simple, fun way to find friends who are down for the night.” If that alone doesn’t scare you, I don’t know what will!

<http://www.checkupnewsroom.com/7-dangerous-apps-that-parents-need-to-know-about/>

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[**Top 5 Best Social Networking Apps For iPhone & Andriod**](http://www.heavy.com/tech/2014/04/top-best-social-networking-apps-iphone-android/)

28 April 2014

**1. Anonymous Chat App: Yik Yak for iPhone & Android**

Yik Yak recently catapulted into the mainstream after being at the center of a number of cyberbullying scandals. Unsavory elements aside, the fact remains that this "bulletin board" app is a great way for people to anonymously communicate with the people around them. According to Fox News, Yik Yak has become the ultimate tool for bullies. (<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/05/09/psychiatrist-view-yik-yak-is-most-dangerous-app-ive-ever-seen/>)

**2. Picture Messaging App: Snapchat iPhone & Android**

Snapchat has been seen as a controversial app as well, because some teens were using it to sent sexts. You don't need to use Snapchat for anything naughty, however. You can send a funny photo or video to a friend, which then self-destructs after 24 hours.

**3. Random Video Chat App: Azar on Android**

While Azar isn't yet available for iOS, this social networking app still merits a spot on this list. Azar is a video chat app that lets you randomly connect with people from all over the globe. Boasting free messaging and free video calls, this app has a user base in the millions. This means it is always easy to find someone interesting to chat with.

**4. Social Networking App For Couples: Avocado iPhone & Android**

Sometimes, you want don't want to network with everyone…you just want to connect with your significant other. Avocado is an app for couples. Couples can use this app to send each other private messages: everything from "I love you" to "Can you pick up a gallon of milk on your way home?"

Avocado lets you share doodles, photos, lists, and even lets you share a calendar. It's a great tool for stay connected, as well as for making plans.

**5. Social Networking Game App: SCVNGR iPhone & Android**

SCVNGR is an app that blends social networking and gamification. In this app, you earn points for completing challenges and visiting real world locations. These points, in turn, can be used to score deals, freebies, and discounts. Unlike other apps that only make you feel like you're connected to others, this app forces you to actually go out there and network in real life.

**The main problem with all these popular apps is that teens think they are completely private, but teens need to understand that anything transmitted through cyberspace can be shared or found if someone really wants to share or find it. Most the time it is not very hard to do. Teens are bullying, sexting, sending sensitive photos and videos to one another using these apps. The worst part is sex crimes are being committed using social media/networking sites and apps.**

<http://www.heavy.com/tech/2014/04/top-best-social-networking-apps-iphone-android/>

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[**Sexual predators targeting teens through latest apps**](http://fox2now.com/2013/11/20/sexual-predators-targeting-teens-through-latest-apps/)

21 November 2013

The new way for sexual predators to target kids is through applications on their phones and iPads that many parents haven’t even heard of.

New social media apps allow strangers to communicate with your child. The main ones police are tracking are Kik, Skype, Twitter, Bendr (gay dating app) and Snap Chat. There are even apps to hide apps. Police recommend parents always open each app on the phone to see what it actually is.

Police recommend parents have your teen friend you, share passwords, check their profile and settings. Don’t allow them to post their birthdate, address or their location. But the most important thing is to talk with your child about what they’re doing on their phones.

Review of top ten monitoring software website available
<http://cell-phone-monitoring-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Monitor texting through Icloud
<http://www.apple.com/icloud/setup/ios.html>

Software monitoring website examples:
<http://iwondersurf.com/>
<http://www.mymobilewatchdog.com/>
<http://www.mobile-spy.com/>

Report predators talking children:
Missing and Exploited Children Cyber hotline:
<http://www.missingkids.com/cybertipline/>

<http://fox2now.com/2013/11/20/sexual-predators-targeting-teens-through-latest-apps/>

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[**Predator Statistics**](http://www.internetsafety101.org/Predatorstatistics.htm)

2013

•Only 18% of youth use chat rooms, however, the majority of Internet-initiated sex crimes against children are initiated in chat rooms. (Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010)

•As of December 2012, NCMEC's child victim identification program has reviewed and analyzed more than 80 million child pornography images since it was created in 2002. (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2012)

•In 82% of online sex crimes against minors, the offender used the victim's social networking site to gain information about the victim's likes and dislikes. (Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010)

•65% of online sex offenders used the victim's social networking site to gain home and school information about the victim (Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010)

•Only 1 in 3 people will report sexual crimes to a trusted adult (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children)

•At least 1.8 million children are used in commercial sex, many sold into sexual slavery by poor families and others abducted and trafficked into brothels (International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children)

•The UN reports that 79% of human trafficking is sexual exploitation (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, 2009)

•Dr. Michael Seto estimated that 3% of the male population is aroused by pedophilic stimuli (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children)

•At least 200 million girls and 100 million boys will be sexually victimized before they reach adulthood (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children)

•At least 8 million children go missing each year (International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children)

•26% of online sex offenders used the victim's social networking site to gain information about the victim's whereabouts at a specific time. (Journal of Adolescent Health 47, 2010)

•There are over 747,408 registered sex offenders in the United States, and over 100,000 are lost in the system (National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 2012)

•Research indicates that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before adulthood;[2] sadly, 30-40% of these victims are abused by a family member and 50% are abused by someone outside the family whom they know and trust. [3] Although the majority of this child sex abuse does not occur online, in the Internet age, offline sex abuse if fueled by pedophiles’ unprecedented access to child pornography online.

•The "4 every girl campaign" found that underage female characters on primetime television are more likely to be presented in sexual scenes than adult women (Parent's Television Council, 2013)

•Pornography and stripping were two forms of exploitation most likely to be written into scripts as punchy lines (Parent's Television Council, 2013)

•One in seven kids received a sexual solicitation online.

•Over half (56%) of kids sexually solicited online were asked to send a picture; 27% of the pictures were sexually-oriented in nature.

• 44% of sexual solicitors were under the age of 18.

•Four percent of all youth Internet users received aggressive sexual solicitations, which threatened to spill over into “real life”. These solicitors asked to meet the youth in person, called them on the telephone or sent offline mail, money or gifts. Also, four percent of youth had distressing sexual solicitations that left them feeling upset of extremely afraid.

•Of aggressive sexual solicitations of youth (when the solicitor attempted to establish an offline contact via in-person meeting or phone call), 73% of youth met the solicitor online.

•Sexual solicitations of youth occur:

o Chatrooms (37%)

o Instant Messaging (40%)

o Other, like gaming devices (21%)

• The more risky behaviors kids engage in online, the more likely they will receive an online sexual solicitation. These risky behaviors include:

o Posting personal information (50%)

o Interacting with online strangers (45%)

o Placing strangers on buddy lists (35%)

o Sending personal information to strangers (26%)

o Visiting X-rated sites (13%)

o Talking about sex with strangers (5%)

 •80% of online offenders against youth were eventually explicit with youth about their intentions, and only 5% concealed the fact that they were adults from their victims.

•The majority of victims of Internet-initiated sex crimes were between 13 to 15 years old; 75% were girls and 25% were boys.

•14 percent of students in 10th-12th grade have accepted an invitation to meet an online stranger in-person and 14 percent of students, who are usually the same individuals, have invited an online stranger to meet them in-person.

•14 percent 7th-9th grade students reported that they had communicated with someone online about sexual things; 11 percent of students reported that they had been asked to talk about sexual things online; 8 percent have been exposed to nude pictures and 7 percent were also asked for nude pictures of themselves online.

•59 percent of 7th-9th grade victims said their perpetrators were a friend they know in-person; 36 percent said it was someone else they know; 21 percent said the cyber offender was a classmate; 19 percent indicated the abuser was an online friend; and 16 percent said it was an online stranger.

•Nine percent of children in 7th-9th grade have accepted an online invitation to meet someone in-person and 10 percent have asked someone online to meet them in-person.

•13 percent of 2nd-3rd grade students report that they used the Internet to talk to people they do not know, 11 percent report having been asked to describe private things about their body and 10 percent have been exposed to private things about someone else's body.

<http://www.internetsafety101.org/Predatorstatistics.htm>

Visit internet safety 101 for tips and information about children online. This is a very informative website.

<http://www.internetsafety101.org/predators101.htm>

Additional information

<http://www.greenville.k12.sc.us/mauldinh/documents/guidance_docs/Internet_Safety_Article.pdf>

<http://www.familysafecomputers.org/predators.htm>

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/family-safety/predators.aspx>

<http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/tech/news/2011-02-28-online-pedophiles_N.htm>

<http://netsecurity.about.com/od/newsandeditoria2/a/socialpredators.htm>

<http://www.wtsp.com/story/news/crime/2014/03/12/2040670/>

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[**Social Network Dangers: The Dark Side of Social Networks (Sexual content and photos in apps)**](http://safety.more4kids.info/228/social-network-dangers/)

2014

A piece done by More4kids Inc. Child Safety and Welfare shows the darker side of social networking and how it can be harmful to children.

Social Networks are really hot right now. Teens are spending a great deal of time on sites like MySpace, Facebook and others. But just what are your teens being exposed to when they log onto their Facebook or MySpace profile? MySpace has become inundated with “profiles” that lead to porn sites.

While social network sites do have merit, they allow people from all over the world to connect. Kids can connect with friends and family who live far away. They can socialize and keep in touch with friends, share pictures, music and videos and play fun games. But there is a dark side to social networks. This is something that every parent with a social network surfing teen should know.

There was a story in “Express” about a poll that was published online about assassinating President Obama. The poll was posted on Facebook. Now, as soon as they found out about it, Facebook administrators removed the poll, but, wow, it was up there for all the world to see for at least a while, meaning that kids could stumble upon it at any time – or any other questionable content that the administrators haven’t yet caught.

Looking at the quizzes on Facebook, you can find some that have sexually explicit titles – and accompanying photograph to match. One application on Facebook, Sex Games has this description: “Sex Games is a tongue-in-cheek multiplayer game where you work with an Entourage to prove your skills in the Club. Complete sexual conquests and pick up all the hottest players on Facebook. See how sexy you really are…” Also, “What’s Your Sex Style?” “Daily Sex Chance,” “Today’s Sex Partner” (description: “Share the love among your friends! Pick a random friend to be your "Sex partner of the day". Grab a new friend every day, and spread the love.”) and even “Do You Want to Have Sex?” These applications have no controls or filters to keep underage children out so your kids have full access to the application content, the graphic, sexually explicit language found posted to the application profile and the graphic photos, bordering on pornographic, seen on some members’ profiles.

Another application, names “Sex or Murder” shows users a series of photos and their quest is to decide if the photos show someone in a sexual act or someone being murdered. Also a “fun” quiz about finding out if you have the ability to take another person’s life is called, “Are You Capable of Murder?” There are several applications that allow users to send virtual drugs to their friends. One application, titled “Drugs,” sports the tag line, “All kinds of fun drugs to do with your friends!”

In all fairness, Facebook does have terms of service that prohibit this type of activity, photos and content, but the problem is that the network is so large it is nearly impossible to police the site. There are links on each profile that allow visitors to block or report the profile for TOS violations, but even that is dependent upon the diligence of Facebook users to actually find the offensive content and make the reports.

<http://safety.more4kids.info/228/social-network-dangers/>

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[**The dangerous impacts of social media and the rise of mental illnesses**](http://thenextweb.com/socialmedia/2014/05/10/dangerous-impacts-social-media-rise-mental-illnesses/)

While there are several reasons for using social networking, it appears that its main function is for increased contact with friends and family along with increased engagement in social activities. However, research has shown that young adults with a strong Facebook presence were more likely to exhibit narcissistic antisocial behavior; while excessive use of social media was found to be strongly linked to underachievement at school.

Tallulah Wilson was just 15 years old when she took her own life back in October 2012. The gifted ballerina had been receiving treatment for clinical depression, but whilst creating an online fantasy of a cocaine-taking character, she began to share self-harm images on social networking site, Tumblr. Shortly after her mother discovered Tallulah’s account and had it shut down, the teenager jumped in front of a train at St. Pancras station in London.

Back in 2002, Tim Piper killed himself at the age of 17. Following his struggle with depression, the student embarked on an online search for advice on how to commit suicide – later hanging himself in his bedroom.

**Cyberbullying is still on the rise.**

Quoting statistics from the Pew Research Center and the World Health Organization respectively, it’s frightening just how high these figures are – especially when you take into account the terrifying growth of online bullying.

Earlier this year, British charity ChildLine found cyberbullying to be on the rise; with children reporting 4,507 cases of cyberbullying in 2012-13 compared to 2,410 in 2011-12.

Why the increase? It appears that somewhere along the way, the privileges of social networking have been abused – both in terms of its meaning, as well as its victims. Amanda Todd, 15, committed suicide in 2012 after undergoing years of cyberbullying.

**The effects of social networks on mental illnesses.**

A matter of contention prevalent within the media, several studies have shown that social networking – Facebook in particular – can have detrimental effects on our wellbeing. Researchers from the University of Michigan assessed Facebook usage over a fortnight and found that the more people that used it, the more negativity they experienced concerning their day-to-day activities; as well as over time, incurring higher levels of dissatisfaction with their life overall.

Meanwhile, a blog published on Everyday Mindfulness uncovered a fascinating concept known as the ‘discrepancy monitor’; “a process that continually monitors and evaluates our self and our current situation against a gold standard.”

10 May 2014 To read more go to <http://thenextweb.com/socialmedia/2014/05/10/dangerous-impacts-social-media-rise-mental-illnesses/>

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