



A parent's guide to social media



Do you know what social media is 'out there' and how it works?

The ones we know ...



Facebook

Age: minimum age of 13

Dangers:

- Prevents children from playing outdoors & having face-to-face interactions with others – this all helps children’s development.
- Exposes children to inappropriate adult content
- Pre-teens don’t have the judgement to know what is okay and what’s not okay to post and can share too much inappropriate personal information



Twitter

Age: minimum age of 13

Dangers:

- In a Twitter survey children said they don’t like seeing inappropriate adult content, the way it can be used to bully others and that it makes it hard to know what is true.
- Easy to expose children to explicit adult content.
- Children are at risk of sharing too much personal information



Instagram

Age: minimum age of 13

Dangers:

- There are no parental controls.
- Easy to share inappropriate photos
- Access to unfiltered photos exposing children to explicit adult content.
- Access to other social media sites without leaving Instagram.
- Can add filters to photos to make yourself seem more beautiful. This creates an unrealistic expectation for children about what they should look like.



Snapchat

Age: minimum age of 13

Dangers:

- Users believe video and photos (snaps) that are shared disappear in just a few seconds but these can be saved as screenshots.
- Just by using the app, the user has given Snapchat access to their address book and uploads that information to its servers meaning that you have just shared private contact information for family and friends without their permission
- When you send a ‘snap’ of any kind to anyone, you give Snapchat a “non-exclusive, worldwide, royalty-free, sub-licensable and transferable license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, publish, distribute, perform and display your content subject to your use of privacy settings.
- Snapchat auto-settings display to others using the app, the exact whereabouts of your child.

Do you know these?



Music.ly

Age: minimum age of 13

Use: create & share videos of up to 15 seconds lip syncing to popular songs.

Dangers:

- Reports that certain key words bring up videos of people flashing or stripping on camera.
- Other keywords bring up videos which promote eating disorders and self-harm.
- Chat feature allows messages from anyone, meaning that these can be upsetting and inappropriate.



Meet.me

Age: minimum age of 13

Use: focuses on creating new relationships for users.

Dangers:

- Reports that certain key words bring up videos of people flashing or stripping on camera.
- Other keywords bring up videos which promote eating disorders and self-harm.
- Chat feature allows messages from anyone, meaning that these can be upsetting and inappropriate.



Yellow / Yubo

Age: minimum age of 13

Use: encourages people to find new friends by swiping left or right to connect via a live stream.

Dangers:

- Locations are enabled and shown to potential 'friends'.
- Inappropriate content – anyone can sign up & anyone can post anything.
- Live streaming – poses a risk that others will use this tool to groom children & that children may share too much personal information 'in the moment' with people they don't actually know.



Live.ly

Age: minimum age of 14 (but terms & conditions say that users are affirming they are 18 which makes no sense)

Use: live streaming app, works off

music.ly

Dangers:

- Live streaming can mean children share too much personal information.
- Live streaming means you forget the lack of privacy and that you may have hundreds of strangers viewing your stream & watching you answer personal questions asked to you by anonymous viewers.
- Viewing broadcasts requires no registration or age verification so literally anyone could be watching.



twitch

Age: minimum age of 13

Use: live game website. You can watch others play games and learn how to play better.

Dangers:

- Most games listed are pretty violent – Minecraft is there but so is Fallout and Call of Duty (neither of these games is recommended for children below the ages of 16 or 17)
- Inappropriate language
- The site runs lots of movie and games advertising which can be age inappropriate.
- Live streaming is risky & a real time waster
- Easy to add up financial costs – each subscription to an individual broadcaster costs money.



sayat.me

Age: minimum age of 18

Use: designed for businesses to give anonymous feedback to companies through asking anonymous questions

Dangers:

- Anyone can ask questions & anyone can give answers.
- Can be a problem for children and pre-teens who want to know personal information about others & in relation to their physical appearances.
- The site is currently inactive pending investigations that it has contributed to teenage suicides.

Did you also know ...

It doesn't matter how smart children are, good judgement isn't something they can excel in, at least not yet. The rational part of the human brain isn't fully developed and won't be so until age 25 or so. Recent research has found that adult and children's brains work differently.

Adults think with the prefrontal cortex – the brain's rational part. This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgement and an awareness of long-term consequences.

Children and young people process information with the amygdala – this is the emotional part. In young people's brains, the connections between the emotional part of the brain and the decision making centre are still developing – and not necessarily at the same rate. That's why young people experience overwhelming emotional input they can't explain later what they were thinking. They weren't thinking as much as they were feeling.

This is why social media can cause such problems for children and teenagers – their brains are simply not yet developed enough to be able to cope with the demands of managing a life online.



Parental Controls:

It is **really important** that we, as parents, know what our children are doing on the internet and when they play on their games consoles. There are so many different ways our children use to engage with the internet, it can seem very overwhelming and difficult to keep track of.

The Internet Matters website is **VERY** helpful with all sorts of advice about every game and console type possible. You can find parental controls for consoles, for wireless routers and for just about every type of smartphone available.

Just typing 'Roblox' into the search box on the website takes you straight to a parent's guide about what the game is, why children like to play it and what the dangers are. There is also a step-by-step easy to follow guide that tells you how you can protect your children when they are playing online.

There are lots of unpleasant people out there who tell our children unpleasant, age-inappropriate things online about issues such as self-harm, eating disorders and suicide – as difficult as it is to hear. If we are serious about protecting them and looking after them, then the Internet Matters website is a great place to start.



www.internetmatters.org

