

Facebook



The Global Social Media Impact Study 2013 found that teens have “lost interest” for Facebook — in part because their parents and other adults have taken over the domain and because their peers engage in too much “drama” on the site. But Facebook still remains the top social media site among young people, who say that their peers continue to stay on the site so they don’t miss anything happening there. Your child may keep a profile on Facebook, but may be much more active on newer platforms.



Twitter

Twitter basically anyone to communicate with anyone with messages of 140 characters or less. Although heavily used worldwide for reputable purposes, it shares its platform with people who spam, troll, abuse, bully and share inappropriate images and videos. It also allows for private messaging and has large degree of anonymity. It is popular with teenagers due to the ability to follow friends and people in the media in the same stream. Due to its popularity and mainstream uses, it is closely integrated into many mobile platforms, often pre-installed on new device.



Ask.fm

This app allows users to interact in a question-and-answer format — with friends, peers, and anonymous users alike. The app is rated ages 13+ and some young people have used the app for hurtful cyberbullying that has been linked to suicides. Some Derbyshire schools have sent home letters calling for students to stop using ask.fm because of its use in several cyberbullying incidents leading to attempted suicides, and its loose regulation and lack of monitoring. The site added a button where users can report abuse after nationwide pressure, but some parents feel it’s too little, too late.



Instagram

Facebook owns this hugely popular photo-sharing site, so you may be more familiar with it than with other photo-sharing apps. Users can add cool filters or create collages of their photos and share them across Facebook and other social media platforms. The app is rated 13+ and may be slightly tamer than Tumblr, but users can still find mature or inappropriate content and comments throughout the app (*there is a way to flag inappropriate content for review*). “Trolls” — or people making vicious, usually anonymous comments — are common. A user can change the settings to block their location or certain followers, but many users are casual about their settings, connecting with people they don’t know well or at all.



Tumblr

Many children and young teens are also active on this 17+ photo-sharing app. It can also be used for sharing videos and chatting. Users can easily access pornographic, violent, and inappropriate content. It should also be noted that users need to jump through hoops to set up privacy settings — and until then, all of a user's photo and content is public for all to see. Mental health experts say that Tumblr can be damaging to adolescents' mental health because it tends to glorify self-harm and eating disorders.



MySpace

MySpace was the predecessor to Facebook and numbers of subscribers have reduced dramatically since its heyday, but now teens are heading back to this network and it's a little more dangerous now that all of their parents are gone. If your child has a profile on MySpace then it's important to check what the privacy settings are and who has access to the information.



Yik Yak

The producers of Yik Yak call it “the anonymous social wall for anything and everything.” All users are anonymous (*registration requires no personal information, other than a user's location*), and their posts are called “Yaks” and show up in a live feed for other users — or “Yakkers” — in their area. The app's content-generation and moderation is entirely in the hands of its users (*who can “vote” posts up or down in the news feed; after two “down” votes, a Yak disappears*). The app is rated ages 17+ and targets college students, who can use it to spread the word about events or share their thoughts. But younger users are easily getting their hands on the app and using it to post hurtful comments and rumours about their peers.



Tinder

Tinder's developers describe the app as “the fun way to connect with new and interesting people around you.” But it's mainly used as a dating tool or an anonymous meet locator by adults, college students, and even younger children. The app is rated ages 17+ but Tinder's privacy policy allows teens as young as 13 to register (*the app connects with Facebook — which is also technically for ages 13+ — to pull in photos for users' Tinder profiles*). Tinder helps people find others in their geographic location and allows users to view each other's' photos and start instant messaging once both people have “liked” one another. The geo-location features and anonymous nature of the app puts young people at risk for catfishing, sexual harassment, stalking, and worse.



Kik Messenger

Kik is a mobile app that people can use to text with friends at high speed and with more of a “face- to-face feel” than regular texting (users’ profile pictures appear in a little bubble next to their text, and they can quickly text photos, sketches, or even pre-designed greeting cards to individuals or groups). The app is rated ages 17+, but there is no age verification so anyone can download it. Like some other instant messenger apps, Kik allows your child to connect with others using just a username (*rather than texting from their phone number*). Reviews in the App Store and Google Play store reveal that many people use Kik to meet strangers or for sexting.



Voxer

This walkie-talkie PTT (*push-to-talk*) app allows users to quickly exchange short voice messages. They can have chats going on with multiple people at a time and just have to tap the play button to hear any messages they receive. Although it largely has an adult following, it’s becoming popular among teens who enjoy its hybrid style of texting and talking. Hurtful messages from cyberbullies can be even more biting when they’re spoken and can be played repeatedly. Surprisingly, the app is rated ages 4+ in the App Store.



Snapchat

Snapchat is an app that allows users to send photos and videos that disappear from view within 10 seconds after they’re received. It’s rated ages 12+. Some young people are using the app to send risqué pics because they believe the images can’t be saved and circulated. But it turns out that Snapchat pics don’t completely disappear from a device, users can take a screenshot before an image vanishes in the app and other apps link to the Snapchat account and saves the pictures before it’s opened in Snapchat.

Poke



Poke is Facebook’s app that, similar to Snapchat, promises that photos sent will “self-destruct” within seconds after they’re received. While Poke isn’t nearly as popular as Snapchat, it is still gaining young users who can use it for sexting. Also like Snapchat, the images sent via Poke can be saved or viewed with certain workarounds. The App store rates it ages 4+ (but it is connected to Facebook, which is a 13+ site).



Vine

Vine is Twitter's mobile app that allows users to shoot and share short loops of video (*6 seconds or less*). It's rated 17+, but children and teens are still downloading it. As with any multimedia app, the content on Vine covers the spectrum. *"With the most basic creative searching, young people can find nudity, sex, drug use, offensive language, hardcore sexuality, and more," "While there are plenty of fun videos, even adults might be shocked at some of the things they find."*



Whisper

This 17+ app's motto is: "Share Secrets, Express Yourself, Meet New People." Whisper lets users set up anonymous accounts to make their messages or confessions overlap an image or graphic (similar to e-postcards), which other users can then "like," share, or comment on. While it allows for creative expression, it can also take overly personal content viral. The app also shows a user's location. Although the app is geared toward older teens and adults, younger children are finding their way to it and there are reports of children being groomed and exploited.



Shots of Me

Justin Bieber has invested in this 12+ "selfie-only" photo-sharing app in part because he was attracted to its "anti-trolling" aspect; it does not have a comment section under photos posted on the app. Instead of a public comment area, the app has a direct-messaging feature where users can only send private messages to one another. The anti-trolling feature might also help ward off cyberbullying among teens who like to put meanness on display (but teens could still be nasty via private message). The app does show a user's location and how long ago a photo was added unless those features are managed in the app's settings. Shots of Me is currently available only for Apple devices.



Omegle

Omegle is an app for chatting with "random strangers." When you open Omega, it chooses a random stranger for you to chat with. After meeting the stranger you can choose to keep talking or find someone else. Omegle can be used by adults to sexually exploit young people.



Chatroulette

Chatroulette is an online chat website that pairs random people from around the world together for webcam-based conversations. Visitors to the website begin an online chat (text, audio, and video) with another visitor. At any point, either user may leave the current chat by initiating another random connection. There are many chatroulette alternative sites; Bazoocam, FunYo, Roulettechat, Quierochat, Dirtyroulette, Chatpig, Chatxroulette, Live Cam4, Manroulette, Tinychat, Facebuzz, Chatrad, Flipchat, Gaypage & Cam Girls, all child participation should be monitored.



Skype

13+, Skype is a computer programme and app, which lets you make audio and video calls to other users around the world. You can also send instant messages. The top 3 concerns: sexual content, strangers talking to you, and webcam risks. The top two reasons why children and young people liked Skype were: it's free, and it is great for socialising with friends and family.



Facetime

Facetime is Apple's video (& audio) calling app that comes built into all Apple devices, iPhones, iPads, iPod Touches and Macs. It is effectively the same as Skype, and is free between Apple devices. Video calls can be made between any two people that know each other's Apple ID (email or phone number). Therefore it is vital that young people only video call people they know and trust.



OovoO

13+, ooVoo is a video chat app. It lets you make video calls, voice calls and send texts to friends and family. You can also start a group video chat with up to 12 people. The default privacy settings are set to 'public', so you can talk to people you don't know, but they can be changed so that you can just talk to your friends. The top 3 concerns were: sexual content, talking to strangers and fake accounts. However the top reason why children and young people liked ooVoo was talking to random people.

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iMessage

iMessage is Apple's instant messaging app that comes built into all Apple devices, iPhones, iPads, iPod Touches and Macs. It is effectively the same as texting, and is free between Apple devices. As with any instant messaging service students can send text, images and videos to people. And these can be forwarded on to other people. Young people can send and receive inappropriate images. They can also send and receive messages that bully others.



Facebook messenger

13+, Facebook Messenger is an app which allows users to communicate with their friends from either their Facebook account, or their phonebook. Users can instant message, create group chats, share photos and videos, record voice messages, have live video chats, or simply talk to their friends and family. The top 3 concerns are: talking to strangers, fake accounts, and lack of control over personal information.



Blackberry messenger (BBM)

BlackBerry's BBM is an instant messaging app. You have your own unique 4 digit PIN and other people can only add you as a contact using this. As well as instant messaging, you can have group chats, voice calls and share voice notes and pictures.



Whatsapp

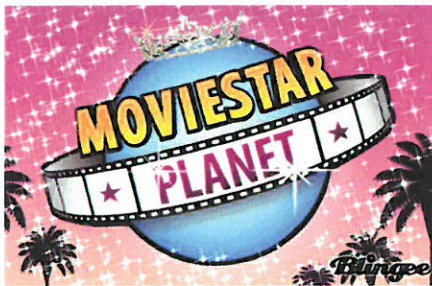
16+, Whatsapp is an instant messaging app, which lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have one to one and group conversations. It's considered young people's first choice app to send personal messages. The top concerns are: inappropriate content and talking to strangers. Young people like it, because it's free for anywhere in the world with data/internet access.

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Moshi Monsters

13+ although popular for primary school age. Moshi Monsters is an online game where you can adopt and look after a pet monster. You can use your pet monster to make your way through different challenges and games. The top concerns are: talking to strangers and bullying.



MovieStar Planet

8+, MovieStarPlanet is an online game. You can create a famous movie star character to talk to others in the chat room, play games and watch videos. The top 3 concerns are: talking to strangers, sexual content and hacking.



Bin Weevils

13+, Bin Weevils is an online virtual world where you can play free online games, chat with friends, adopt a virtual pet, grow your own garden and watch cartoons. You can send messages to other players in the game. The top concerns are: talking to strangers, hacking, and bullying.

For more information most of these apps can be found at:

<http://www.net-aware.org.uk/>
<http://grindlefordprimaryschool.co.uk/e-safety/popular-apps/>

