

A Parents Guide Social Media

What is Social Media?

 A variety of Internet-based applications that allow users to interact and form networks and communities by creating and sharing information and ideas

What Social Media Do Teenagers Use?



#1

Instagram

A service built around sharing and commenting on photos



#2

Twitter

A "microblog" limited to "tweets" of 140 characters or less



#3

Facebook

World's largest social network with over a billion users

(Facebook is becoming less popular as more parents join in.)

What Else Is Out There?



Kik instant messaging app for mobile devices



Vine a service for sharing short videos



YouTube a massive collection of videos



What's App instant messaging app for mobile devices



Reddit a social networking and news website



Flickr an image and video hosting service



Tumblr a popular blogging platform



Myspace one of the first social networking sites, now based on music



Pinterest a huge collection of "pinned" photos



Tinder a location based dating app



Google+ Google's less popular version of Facebook



LinkedIn social media for professional networking

And many, many more...

What Are The Risks?

T.M.I. Too Much Information.

Teens forget that sometimes what they post isn't private and can't be erased. **Your child may be inadvertently putting himself or herself at risk by sharing information like home address, current location, and future plans.** They may also be leaving themselves open to cyberbullying and identity theft.

Cyberbullying

People often forget about the real-life consequences of their behavior online. Social media emboldens teens to say things online they probably wouldn't say face-to-face. **The more time your child spends interacting online the more likely it is that he or she will receive (or send) an insensitive or damaging message.**

Sexting

Some teens make poor decisions in romantic relationships by creating, copying, and sharing inappropriate photos and videos. **Teens lose control over embarrassing photos which may get broadly distributed with devastating consequences.** Young people may even run into legal trouble breaking child pornography laws.

What Else Should I Be Concerned About?

Digital Footprint

Many young people are leaving behind a trail of photos, opinions, reactions, and quotes that may not paint a flattering picture of themselves. **Inappropriate, hateful, or just plain negative words and images could turn away potential colleges, employers, and even friends in the future.**

Snapchat

Snapchat is a "photo messaging" app that allows users to send pictures that disappear in a few seconds. **Some consider Snapchat a gateway to sexting because it encourages teens to be spontaneous and lower their inhibitions.** Despite the claims, there are many ways to save and re-distribute Snapchat photos.



Ask.fm

Ask.fm (and similar services) allow users to communicate with each other anonymously. Rather than protect your child, anonymity encourages inappropriate, obscene, or threatening interactions, including with complete strangers. **If your child wants to be anonymous, you probably won't approve of what they're doing.**



What Can I Do?

- imagine the kinds of things you would have done if social media was around when you were their age
- talk to your child about his/her online habits
- discuss what is and isn't OK to view
- discuss what is and isn't OK to post
- discuss what is and isn't OK to participate in
- require your child to share their login information with you
- monitor device use, limit screen time
- only allow computer use in common areas of the house
- have your child hand-in their phone before going to bed
- review privacy settings together
- make sure "geotagging" of photos is turned off

Wouldn't it be better to just ban this stuff entirely?

Not necessarily. There are many positive outcomes and advantages to using social media well. Additionally, potential schools, employers, and friends may be interested in your child's digital identity in the future and not having any online presence can actually raise some concerns. **The key is fostering positive social media habits, and having a well-managed digital footprint you and your child can be proud of.**