Guide to Social Media for Parents / Carers

ask.fm
Social Network

spring.me
Social Network

chatroulette
Online video chat

Ask.fm and Spring.me are social networking sites where users ask each other questions. Users can share their ideas and opinions on any topic.

Both services allow users to ask questions anonymously, which means that users who ask hurtful or inappropriate questions can hide their identity. It is possible to set user access to 'turn off' anonymous questions. All content posted on these sites is public and can be seen by anyone. The site is integrated with Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter meaning that content can be shared on these platforms also. Users can block other users, report offensive or inappropriate content and protect their accounts.

www.ask.fm/about/safety
www.spring.me/ !/safety

Chatroulette is an online chat website that pairs strangers at random.

Users have to be registered to begin an online 'chat' with another user, via webcam. Either user may curtail the conversation at any point by clicking 'next' in order to move on to another random user. According to the website, you cannot use the service if you are under 18 and nudity is prohibited. It also warns that it is possible for chats to be recorded. 'Scammers' are known to do this and can then blackmail a person with the footage.   It is also possible for a person to use fake footage in order to conceal their identity.

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facebook
Social Network

Facebook is an online social network that lets you communicate and get in touch with friends. Users must be 13 years or older and must register before creating a personal profile. They can add friends, exchange messages and receive notifications on their profile of friends' activity online.

Users can add details about themselves to their profiles and display a picture. They can then share updates about what they've been doing, posting a 'status' which will appear in their friends' 'newsfeeds'. For teenagers the default setting for sharing is 'Friends only' but there is an option to alter this, which affects the audience that can view their posts. Users can be requested to be another user's 'friend', share photos/video or external links, 'poke' someone, 'tag' individuals in photos, create common interest groups and also interact via online games hosted on the site. Users are able to choose who they share their profile and information with through their settings and they can block other users and report any unwanted contact or abuse. Facebook also allows users to share their location for every post.

www.facebook.com/fbsafety

instagram
Photo and Video Sharing Social Network

Instagram enables users to share and manipulate pictures publicly. They can also view, comment and 'like' posts shared by friends. There is no private messaging on Instagram.

Users can upload or take a photo or video and use Instagram to make changes to them. They can also then be shared to other social network sites such as Facebook or Twitter.   Users must be 13 years old or over. Users can choose whether to be 'public', meaning anyone can subscribe to view their photos and videos.   Alternatively there is also the privacy option where users can choose whether to approve follower requests. In addition there is the option to switch on geotagging which means the location of the photo being uploading is shared. Users can also block and report other users.

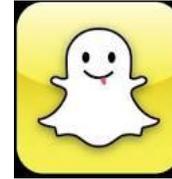help.instagram.com

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skype
Instant Messenger/Video or Audio Chat

Skype is a free application that allows users to 'Skype' other users on a mobile phone, computer or TV, enabling users to speak to, see and send instant messages to other users.

Skype allows users to call other uses, either individually or in group using a microphone and/ or webcam on a mobile phone, tablet or PC. It states that the Skype websites and software are not intended for or designed for users under the age of 13. Skype have a number of measures in place to protect teenagers, including privacy options.

www.skype.com/en/security

snapchat
Photo Messaging

Snapchat is a photo messaging service which allows users to take photos, record videos, adding text or drawings, and send them to others.
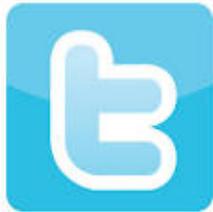
Users control the length of time that recipients are able to view content by setting a very short time limit from 1-10 seconds. Once the time limit has elapsed, the 'snap' will disappear from the recipient's device and is also deleted from the snapchat server. Snapchat states that it is not intended for children under the age of 13 and those aged 13-17 should have permission from a parent or legal guardian before using it. Children under the age of 13 are only able to access a version of Snapchat called 'SnapKidz', which they are automatically directed when they register, provided they have entered their correct age. This version does not include messaging features or involve the collection of personal information.

Snapchat allows users to block other users or adjust their privacy settings in order to prevent future contact from an individual. Although the ability to save snaps is not a feature of the Snapchat application, recipients may be able to take a 'screen shot' or 'screen –capture'. It is also possible to use a second device to take a picture of the message whilst it is still displayed on the screen. Snapchat attempts to detect if a recipient takes a screenshot and alerts the sender.

http://support_snapchat_com/ca/abuse

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TWITTER
Social Network

Twitter is an online service that allows users to send and receive posts of up to 140 characters in text, known as tweets. Tweets are posted to users' profiles, sent to their followers and can be searched for on Twitter search.

Anyone can read tweets, whereas only registered users can post tweets through the Twitter website, via text message or on a mobile app. Users can 'follow' others through their tweets, including celebrities or personal acquaintances. They in turn can then 'follow' them. When users see others that have posted something they find interesting, they can choose to 'reply' or to share their post by 'retweeting' it onto their profile. Users can send 'direct messages 'to someone else's inbox as long as they are following them. Tweets are public by default. However, users do have the option to protect their tweets, which means that they can only be read by approved followers and do not come up in searches.

www.support.twitter.com

YOUTUBE
Video sharing Social Network

YouTube allows users to search for, watch and share videos on almost any topic. Anyone can watch Youtube videos, whilst only registered users, who must be 13 years old or over, can upload videos, 'broadcast' themselves, or comment on videos.
Users can opt to use the 'Safety Mode' setting. This then helps to filter out videos with potentially objectionable content from searches. This feature can be used as a kind of parental control setting.

www.youtube.com/yt/policy and safety