RAISING DIGITALLY RESPONSIBLE YOUTH
A Parent's Guide

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SAFER SCHOOLS TOGETHER

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Education

Introduction

With society heading in   direction of being constantly connected to technology, what do we need to know as parents to protect our children and teach them responsible and appropriate uses of technology? The parameters of rules and expectations that you put in place at home will undoubtedly guide their behaviour in the years to come.

Given the fact that technology has entered our lives at such a rapid pace and continues to evolve, raising our children in a digital era can seem overwhelming at times. The reality is that apps and technological devices will change, but the behaviour stays the same. Moderation is key to managing technology use in our homes. It does not need to be an all or nothing approach, with either absolute prohibition or full unchecked usage.

It is beneficial to maintain an open, transparent, and ongoing dialogue with our children regarding the internet, technology, social media, and video games. Remaining approachable could be the difference between whether they decide to come to us when issues or uncomfortable situations arise rather than feeling alone in the process or going to their peers instead.

Technology is here to stay, whether we like it or not. The reality of today's students is that their digital reputation or how they choose to represent themselves online is being evaluated and assessed by future employers or admissions departments. The goal of this parent guide is to help introduce the major social media platforms and games that are either being used already or have   potential to be used by our children.

Stay the course. We want to prepare our children for their tech-infused futures and walk down this digital journey alongside them. Good luck!

General Digital Parenting Tips:

- Keep phones and devices out of their bedroom. Sleep is important for growth! If possible, have a central charging station for all portable household digital devices (e.g. our master room, kitchen table)

- Know their passwords – it's our parental right. You paid for the devices and should be able to randomly spot-check them at any point in time

- Do your homework! Download the app first and try it out, play around with it and do your research. If your child already has the app or the game, ask them to teach you about it!

- Put tape or a sticky over the laptop or iPad camera when not in use

- Try to build a culture of openness and trust in establishing a two-way dialogue about technology and social media. You want to be approachable **when** (not if) an issue comes up in their digital lives

- Technology isn't going anywhere, try to introduce technology into your home and your childrens' lives at a pace you feel comfortable relative to their age group. Enforce moderation and balance instead of eternal prohibition

- We are not our child's best friend! We are responsible for ensuring their safety in the offline and online world

- Google yourself and your family, address, emails, phone numbers, social media usernames – see what shows up before others do

- Remind them of the permanence of anything posted online or sent electronically

The Essentials

Hashtag:
A hashtag is a symbol (#) added before a word that turns that word into a searchable category indexed by the social media network and becomes discoverable by other users. Instagram and Twitter are the primary platforms where hashtags are used. Hashtags are a way of making it easier to find, follow, and contribute to a conversation.

Username:
A username is a unique online identity that is chosen to represent someone online or on social media. Most platforms make you choose a username when you create the account.

Passwords:
We all know the challenge of trying to remember our password for a website or an app and it's easy to fall into habits of using the exact same passwords, easy ones, for all of our logins. This is a dangerous practice, especially if it is something easily guessable such as a dog or our kid's name and their birthday!

We should remind our children **_not to share their passwords with their friends!_** This is the number 1 reason behind accounts getting "hacked".

Use different passwords for different sites and build strong ones: mix of numbers, letters, and special characters (!@#$%^&*).

These are the most common passwords statistically used around the world (based on data breaches)
If any of these are yours – change them!

1. password
2. 12345
3. 123456789
4. qwerty
(partial top line of the keyboard)
5. qwertyuiop
(top line of the keyboard)
6. letmein
7. abc123
8. 111111
9. welcome
10. football

HINT: Try a password manager! There are many free apps available. A password manager stores

Social Media Apps To Know

Snapchat ("Snap")

Since its release in 2011, Snapchat has remained to this day the most popular social media application that our youth are using to communicate and share their digital lives with each other. Snapchat is the de facto medium of communication for students grade 7-12. The reason for its popularity is that it turned text communication into a visual experience that allows users to send disappearing photos that leave behind no evidence and don't (for the most part) become part of a youth's digital footprint.

The most common questions we receive from parents are about Snapchat and how it works. Let's go in-depth!

The foundation of Snapchat is the disappearing photo or video that vanishes into thin air after it's been opened. Users can set a viewing time of up to 10 seconds or infinite amount of time after which, once viewed, it will be deleted from the recipient's device and as the company claims, from its servers.

Snapchat allows users to take still photos, record short videos, add text and create drawings and send them to a personalized and typically private list of friends. However, nothing stops the recipient from taking a screenshot or using a different device to take a picture of the image or video. Note: if you take a screenshot using the recipient device, within Snapchat, it will notify the sender that you've taken a copy.

Despite news headlines that suggest that Snapchat is just a "sexting" app or one that is ONLY used to send nude photos, this is not the case and represents a very small usage of the app.

Snapchat Lingo

Snaps
A user takes a photo/video using their digital device/smartphone in real-time. The user can select a   time of 1-10 seconds or choose infinite time for the receiver to view the photo/video. A user can elect to have the photo/video they have just taken to be saved into their photo gallery or simply sent via Snapchat without being saved on their device.

Stories
A user can add the photo/video to their "story". Depending on the user's privacy settings, the photo & videos added to a story can be viewed by all snapchat users or just those on their friends list for only up to 24 hours.

Chat
A user can type a text message within the Snapchat app to their friends using this feature. Once both parties have viewed the message, the message will vanish. Photos from the camera roll or gallery of the user's photo can be uploaded and sent within chat. Group chats often exist between multiple friends.

Streaks
Seen within the chat log screen, a person's "Snapchat Streak" is the number of consecutive days that the account owner and a friend have sent at least but no less than 1 snap per day to each other. If they do not snap each other in 24 hours' time, they lose their streak with their friend (a huge deal!)
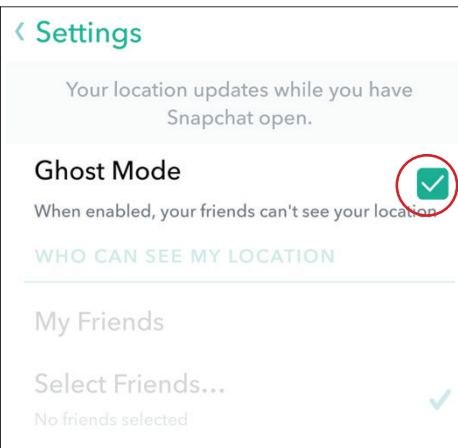
Snap Map

With the Sna   ap, you can view Snaps of sporting events, celebrations, breaking news, but perhaps most concerning you   view on a map where your friends are, right now. If you and a friend follow one another, you can share your locations with each other so you can see **exactly** where they are and what they are doing (driving, sleeping, stationary), in real time plotted on a map.
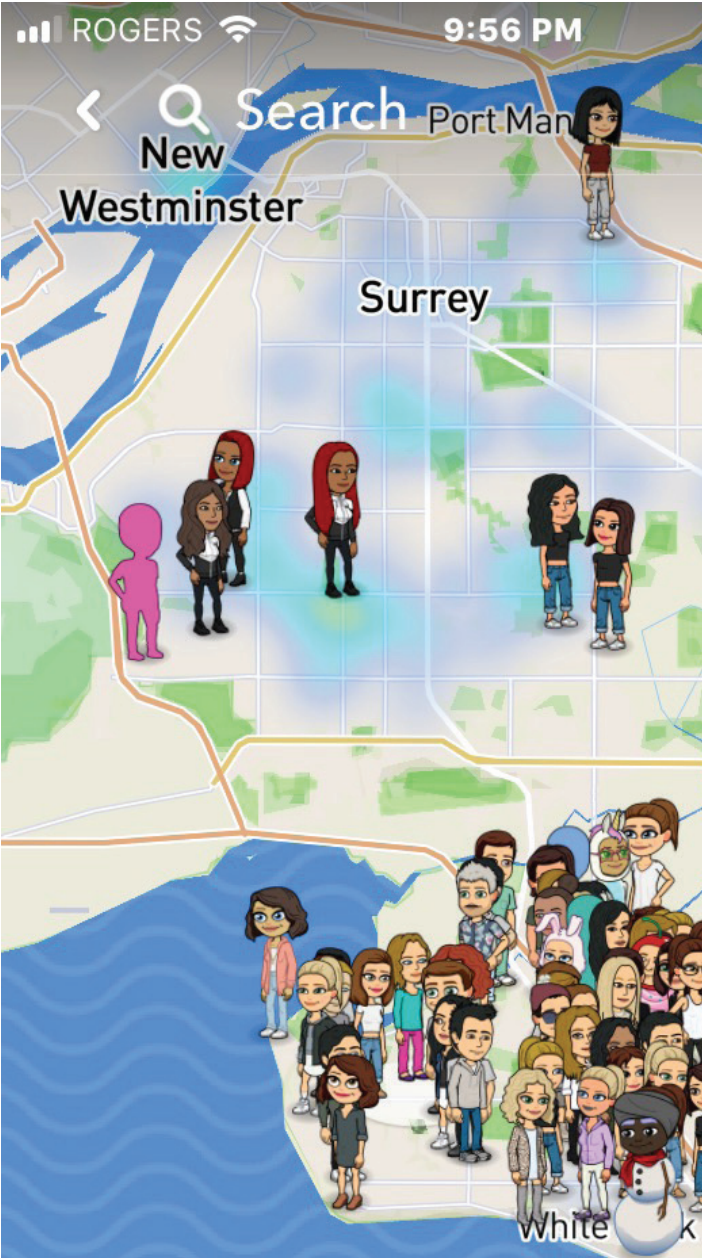
These are all of Ashley's friends who have Snapmap enabled (the vast majority). They are represented by the Bitmoji that they designed.

This is why it is so important that our children are only communicating on Snapchat with close friends they know in real life.

Within settings, you can turn off Snapmap completely by enabling Ghost mode. Or only allow it to be viewed by their best friend and YOU.

Enable Ghost Mode

## Before a photo is taken.

Tap the circle below to capture photo.

Flash Control.

Enter Search menu for friends, locations, events, etc.

Swap front facing camera or back camera.

Take photo (touch) or video (hold).

Access private "Chat feature".

Discover: Access a collection of public Snap Stories that are targeted to you.

Memories: Access personal photos saved exclusively to snapchat cloud.

After a photo is taken.

Write messages/text on the photo.

Delete photo and start again.

Draw on photo.

Add stickers/emojis.

Create custom stickers.

Attach Website to the snap.

Select how many seconds the recipient can view the picture (1-10, or infinite).

Save photo to camera roll or Memories (snapchat cloud).

Add to "My Story" Will be viewable for 24 hours by all contacts.

Send photo or video to chosen contacts.

Inbox / Outbox of Snaps with Friends:

These are real screenshots from a grade 10 student et's call her Ashley.

Ashley's friends' bitmoji

Bitmoji: is a customizable expressive cartoon avatar.
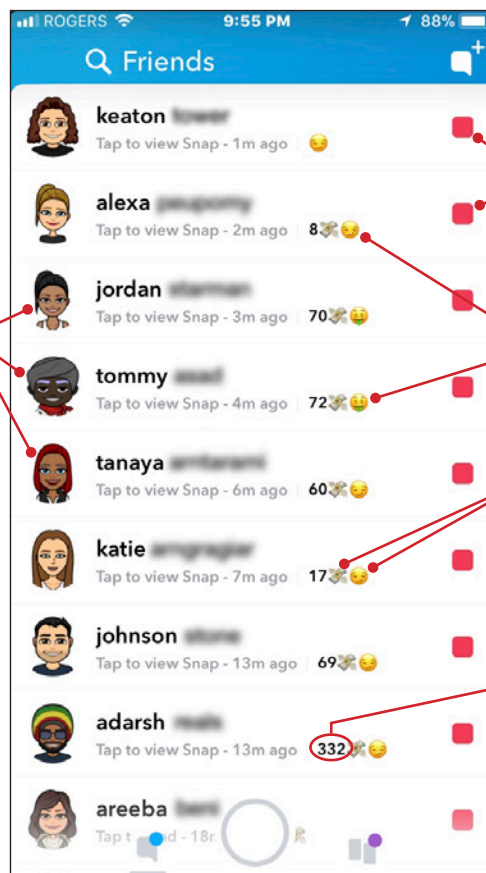
Unopened Snap(s) from this friend.

Icon guide on the following page.

Each of these emoji's represents something. Find out what on (page 10).

The infamous Streak: 332 consecutive days Adarsh and Ashley have sent at least 1 snapchat per day to each other.

Friends Screen Icon Guide

Sent Icons

You sent a Snap without audio

You sent a Snap with audio

You sent a Chat

Depending on privacy settings, a gray pending icon may appear
if someone has not accepted your friend request

Opened Icons

A friend opened a Snap without audio

A friend opened a Snap with audio

A friend opened a Chat

A friend viewed and received Cash

Received Icons

You have an unopened Snap (or group of Snaps) without audio

You have an unopened Snap (or group of Snaps) that includes audio

You have an unread Chat

Viewed Icons

Your Snap sent (without audio) has been viewed

Your Snap sent (with audio) has been viewed

Your Chat has been viewed

A Snap or Chat is pending and may have expired

Screenshot Icons

A screenshot has been taken of your Snap without audio

A screenshot has been taken of your Snap with audio

A screenshot has been taken of your Chat

Replay Icons

Your Snap sent without audio has been replayed

Your Snap sent with audio has been replayed

**Replay Feature: You can replay a Snap once per
day after it's been opened and disappeared.**

Courtesy of Snapchat.

Friend Emojis

Friend Emojis help you keep track of your friends on Snapchat! These can change over time, based on the way you use Snapchat.

🌟 **Gold Star** — Someone has replayed this person's snaps in the past 24 hours. They must have something interesting to show.

💛 **Yellow Heart** — You are #1 best friends with each other. You send the most snaps to this person, and they send the most snaps to you.

❤️ **Red Heart** — You have been #1 BFs with each other for two weeks straight.

💕 **Pink Hearts** — You have been #1 BFs with each other for two months straight. Dedication!

👶 **Baby** — You just became friends with this person.

😎 **Face With Sunglasses** — One of your best friends is one of their best friends. You send a lot of snaps to someone they also send a lot of snaps to.

😬 **Grimacing Face** — Your #1 best friend is their #1 best friend. You send the most snaps to the same person that they do. Awkward.

😏 **Smirking Face** — You are one of their best friends... but they are not a best friend of yours. You don't send them many snaps, but they send you a lot.

😊 **Smiling Face** — Another best friend of yours. You send this person a lot of snaps. Not your #1 best friend, but they are up there.

🔥 **Fire** — You are on a Snapstreak! You have snapped this person every day, and they have snapped you back. Increases with number of consecutive days.

💯 **Hundred** — 100 Day Snapstreak. The 100 emoji appears next to the fire when you snap back and forth with someone for one hundred days in a row.

⌛ **Hourglass** — Your Snapstreak is about to end. Send another snap to keep it alive.

🎂 **Birthday Cake** — This friend has a birthday today. Only displays if friend has the Birthday Party feature enabled in settings.

Note: these emoji's can be customizable and swapped but typically this is the legend.
Snapchat determines the emoji that shows up next to a friend's name.

Yolo

YOLO Yolo (an acronym for 'You Only Live Once') is third party application that is used within Snapchat. The app is free a free add-on feature for Snapchat and within a week of its release, Yolo became the most downloaded iPhone app in the U.S. When users connect Yolo to their Snapchat account, they can add a sticker to their Snapchat Story that invites whoever has access to their story to give them feedback or ask them questions. Then, users are able to respond to those questions completely anonymously.

Yolo is a very attractive app to young people as it gives them anonymity to say what they want without having to face repercussions for it. This is not only seen as beneficial to the question responders, but also to the question askers as it could be a potential opportunity for your crush to tell you they like you or someone tell you that you look good when they otherwise wouldn't have the courage to say it to your face.

This isn't the first time we have seen this type of app. Others include: Ask.fm, Curious Cat, Yik Yak, Whisper, Secret, Sarahah, TBH, and Tellonym. Although Yolo is currently the most popular, this will most likely not be the last we see of anonymous platforms.

Unfortunately, this type of "bathroom wall"-style anonymous platform can and has been abused and creates a place for bullies to stay truly anonymous and protected from any possible consequences. Although to teens a nice compliment such as "you rocked your presentation in class today!" or "your new hair cut looks awesome!" from a stranger can feel like a sense of validation, these anonymous apps can be hubs for cyberbullying and cause serious emotional trauma from inappropriate use. The Yolo app itself is relatively harmless and it is possible to use the app safely; however, it is important to have a conversation with your child about the power of words, even if they are anonymous, and how important it is to think about any possible consequences before they type.
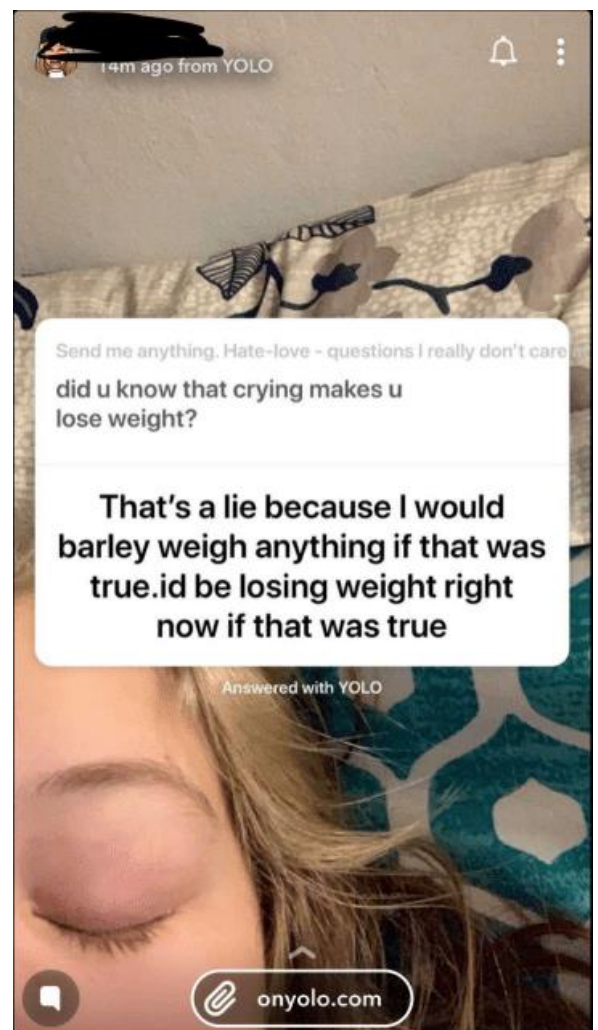
Instagram ("IG")

Owned by Facebook, the popular photo-sharing app, Instagram, has over   monthly active users. If you see a youth scrolling up with their thumb on their smartphone looking at photos, chances are they are looking at Instagram.

Hashtags (#) are used often on this platform, grouped together and this gives people a way to be introduced to and follow other users with similar interests.

Privacy Settings on Instagram

On Instagram you either share your posts with everyone by having a public account, or you have a private account and share only with people that you have **(ideally)** approved to follow you.
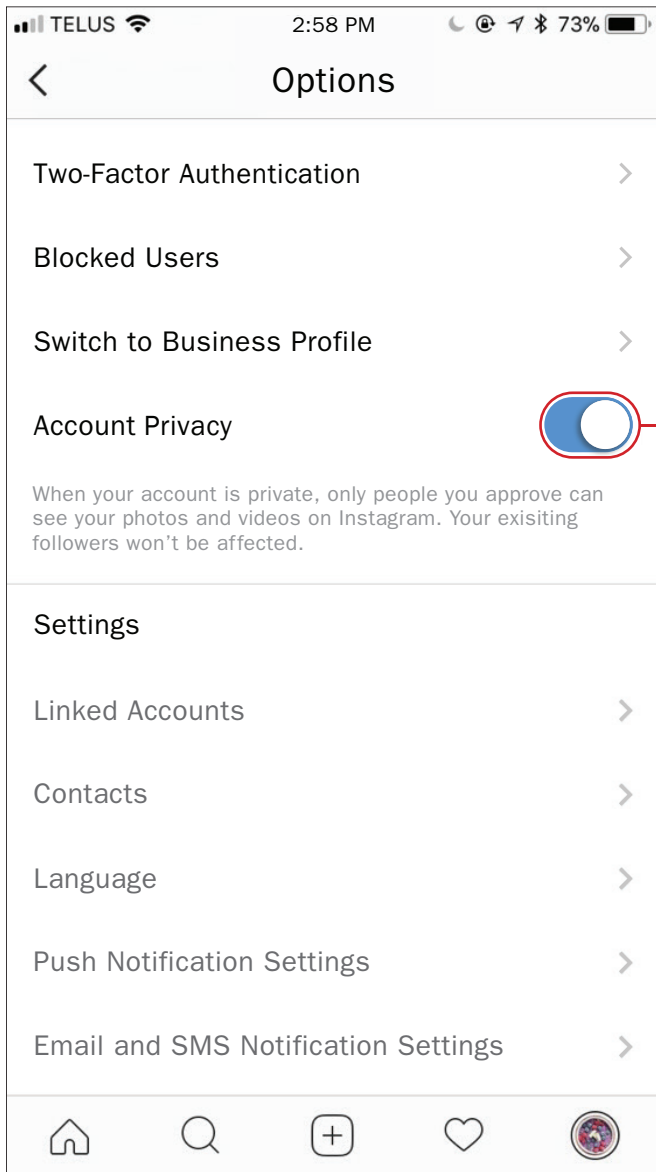
SUGGESTED PRIVACY

We recommend that *all students should have a private Instagram account* for safety reasons. The exception might be a grade 11-12 student wanting to build their digital brand and establish an account that university recruiters and employers can find.

Enable Private
Account

Instagram Stories

Users are able to post videos and/or photos for their followers to see which are visible for a 24- hour period. You can also send videos and/or photos that will disappear after being viewed once. This concept was copied from the very popular Snapchat usage and has quickly gained usage among youth. Users can see who has watched their Istagram stories.

IGTV

Instagram also joined the live broadcasting market and allows IG users to live stream video to their followers. If your profi e is public, anyone is able to watch these videos.

Direct Messaging

is a private message inbox. This is a feature that allows users to privately communicate within the Instagram app, similar to text messaging. This is where children can receive private messages from their friends, participate in group chats, or even receive messages from strangers. There is no way to turn
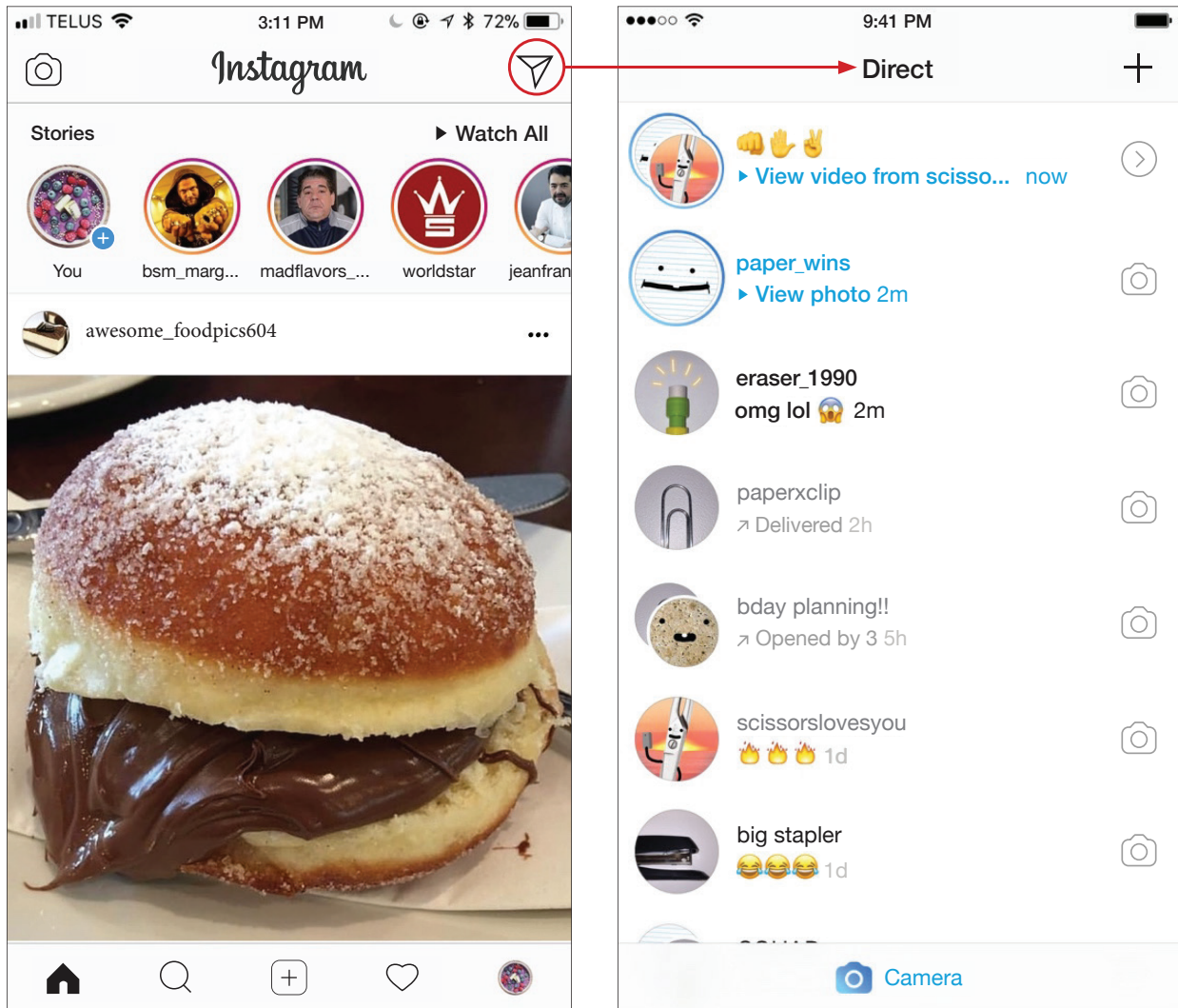
TikTok

Formerly known as Musical.ly, TikTok is currently the world's most popular video-sharing social networking application based out of Beijing, China and is centered around short videos typically made to popular songs. TikTok reigned as the most downloaded app (33 million downloads) in Apple's App Store for five quarters and with over 1.5 billion downloads as of last year, it is not going away any time soon.

TikTok has strategically marketed to younger audiences, and although users must be 13 to sign up see up (see "The Rules That No One Follows" on page 22), the content isn't being filtered, therefor age-inappropriate content inevitably is reaching the 41% of its' estimated audience that are between the ages for 16 and 24 as well as potentially younger audiences.

As of 2019, the average time a user spent on TikTok was 52 minutes per day. This time is spent either creating and sharing short videos of themselves or watching the existing plethora of TikTok videos uploaded to the platform already. Either way, it's being done for almost an hour every day. This time is similar to amounts spent on other social media platforms and apps such as Instagram (53 minutes) and Snapchat (49.5 minutes).

There is also a growing number of adults on TikTok. In less than 18 months, the number of US adult TikTok users grew from 2.6 million adult users in October 2017 to 14.3 million in March of 2019. The unfortunate part about more and more adults joining the app is that they are not necessarily there to create a safe space for kids, and may not even realize that children of potentially all ages, if not just from ages 13 to 18, can see the content they choose to post. Although TikTok states in their Terms of Service that any inappropriate content will be taken down by moderators, it may take hours, days, or even not at all. This is something to consider when keeping in mind that more than 1 billion TikTok videos were viewed **every day** in the last year.

YouTube

PewDiePie, Logan Paul, Jake Paul, iDubbbz, and Filthy Frank. These names may not be familiar to you, but if your child spends time on Youtube, they have likely come across videos by these Youtube "famous" video creators before. The over-the-top humour, outrageous pranks, and downright obscene content has made these YouTube creators extremely popular and influential. Owned by Google, consider Youtube the Google of Video. Created in 2005, YouTube is currently the most visited website in the world with over **5 billion videos watched per day!** YouTube can be used as a way for children to pass the time, express themselves and to watch content they enjoy like sports, video games, make-up channels, etc. However, it can also be very easy to cross over into watching less than appropriate topics and content. It is important for parents to set parameters on video watching and moderate access to age appropriate videos.
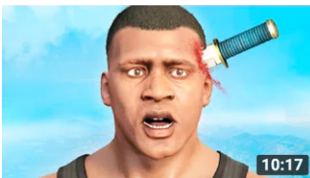
GTA 5 FAILS & WINS #48 (GTA 5 Funny Moments Compilation/Epic Moments)
RanGO Games • 339K views • 1 week ago
GTA 5 FAILS & WINS - #48 (GTA 5 Funny Moments Compilation)

*GTA stands for Grand Theft Auto which will be discussed later

MY GIRLFRIEND FOUND MY SIDE CHICKS UNDERWEAR...
Jake Paul ✔ 2.6M views • 1 day ago
I KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME SUBSCRIBE ➤ http://bit.ly/SUB2JAKEPAUL | ☆ PREVIOUS VLOG ➤ https://www.youtube.com/
New

100 ACCURATE LIFE HACKS
TVFilthyFrank ✔ 20M views • 2 years ago
Most life hacks don't REALLY help in real life situations. That's why I set out on a journey to find the most efficient life hacks. Thanks

These are just a few examples of some of the videos that are posted on YouTube that range from family friendly to inappropriate.

You can watch Youtube passively, without being logged into an account, or you can have an account and track what videos you watch, like and subscribe to channels and upload your own videos.

Uploading Content - Privacy Settings

- For one to create an account, the minimum age requirement is 13 years old. This age parameter, like all others on social media sites is not enforced in reality   22

- When uploading videos, there are three different modes of video privacy – Public, Private, and Unlisted.

- Public videos can be searched, watched and shared with anyone in the world. Private videos can only be seen by the uploader and users that they choose. Unlisted videos can only be viewed and shared by users who have the link to the video.

Controlling Inappropriate Content from being viewed

- Remember, no moderation or filtering solution is 100% foolproof and there is always the possibility of exposure to mature content

- However, the best solution Youtube offers on its website/app is being logged into a Google account (Remember YouTube is owned by Google) and turning on "Restricted Mode"

- "Restricted Mode is an optional setting that you can use to help screen out potentially mature content that you may prefer not to see or don't want others in your family to see"

.ıll TELUS 🌐   12:51 PM   @ ⌇ ⏰ ⚡ 73% ▰

▶️ YouTube   🎥   🔍   **Access settings on the device**
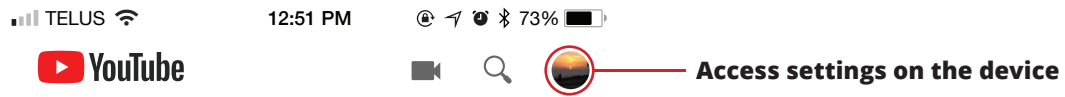
- Access the settings on the phone by opening the YouTube app, and tapping on the display picture in the top right

- From there, the settings can be accessed. "Restricted Mode" can block content that has been flagged by other users for inappropriate content

- In "My Channel" option, users can also change who can view things like your child's liked videos, created playlist, and subscriptions
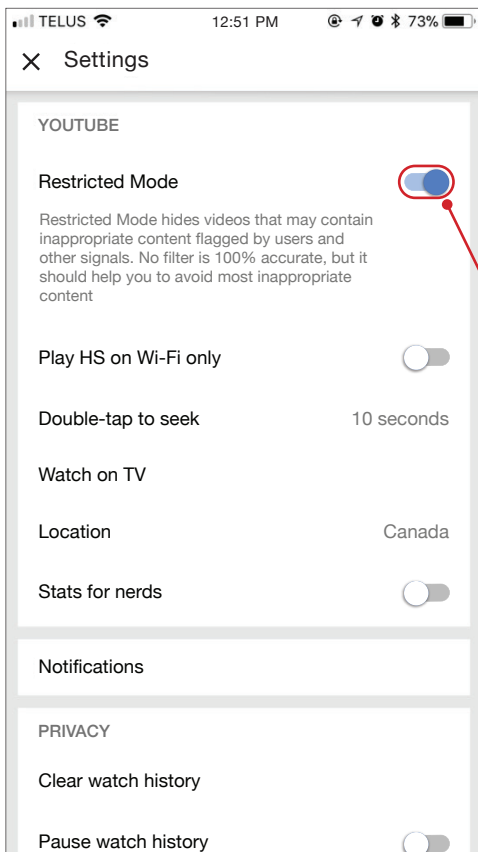
On the App: **On the Youtube website on a computer:**
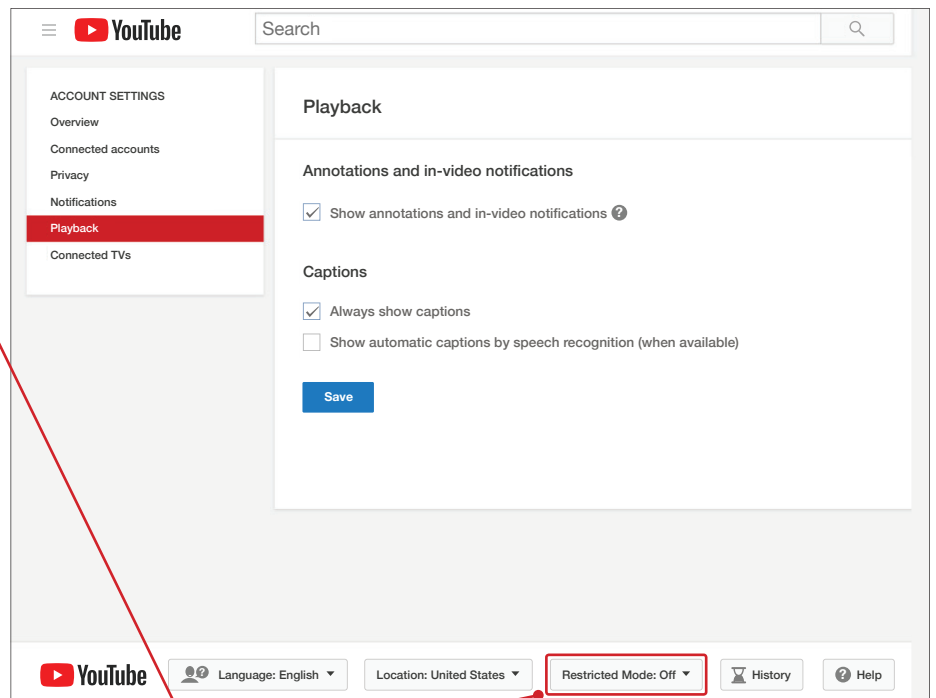
Restricted Mode

YouTube Kids

For the younger audiences, YouTube has created an app that is specifically aimed at youth from approximately ages 3-8. The videos are heavily censored and focus more on entertainment and learning. YouTube Kids is a separate app and must be set up using an adult's email address. From there, the adult can choose profiles for their children. They can even control in-app searching. You can set up kid profiles and set viewing timers. This can be a good platform to introduce our youngest to digital media **on our own terms**.
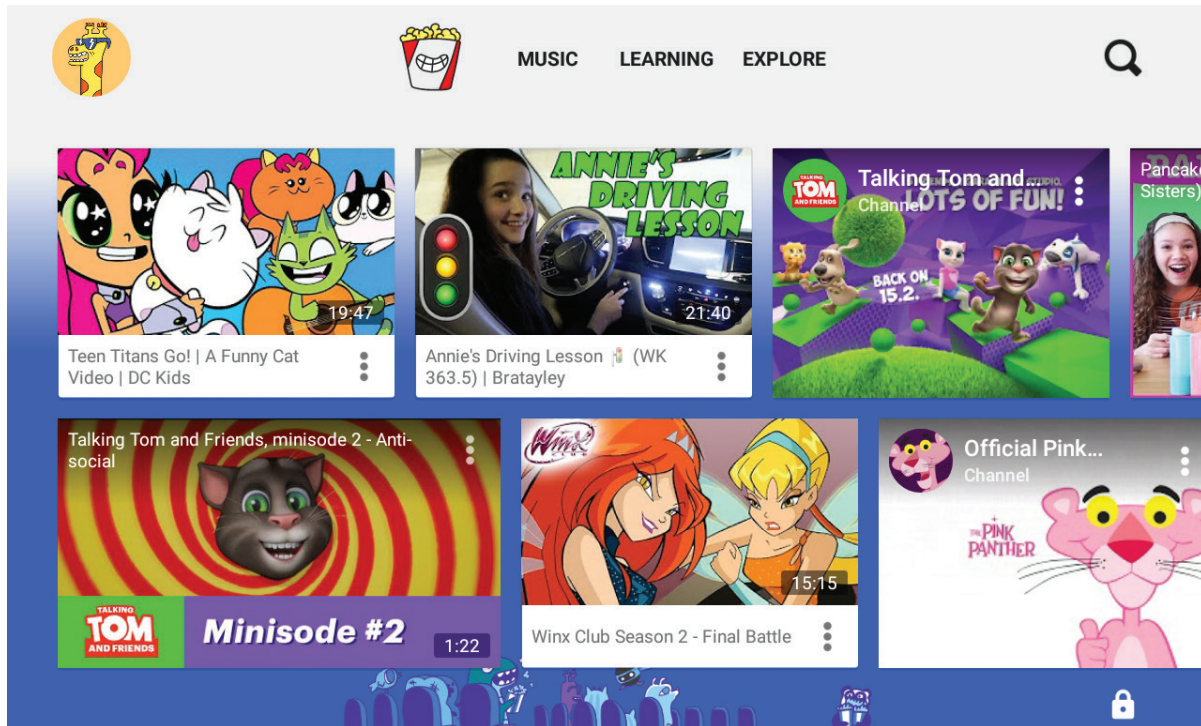
Kid Profiles

Create up to eight kid profiles, each with their own viewing preferences, video recommendations, and settings.

LEARN MORE

Blocking

Find a video or channel you don't want your kid to watch? Block it to automatically remove it from all of your kids' profiles.

LEARN MORE

Watch History

Find a video or channel you don't want your kid to watch? Block it to automatically remove it from all of your kids' profiles.

LEARN MORE

Search Control

Turn search on so kids can access more videos. Turn search off for a more contained experience.

LEARN MORE

Timer

Set up a timer to put limits on how long your kids can platy with the app.

LEARN MORE

Video Reporting

Alert us immediately by reporting videos that shouldn't be in the app. The video will be sent to us for fast review.

LEARN MORE

Kik Messenger

Kik Messenger is a smartphone application for instant messaging and is the most popular amongst our youngest children as a way to communicate, particularly when they only have a and no texting plan . We will often see taglines posted for all to see with "kik me" followed by their username, which has been this means once they have a username. We have seen Kik being used by students as young as grade 3 and 4 students. We encourage you to continue having conversations with your children about messaging and expectations.

Geo-locational Dangers on Smartphones and Digital Devices

The incorporation of GPS into our mobile digital devices allows us to use Google Maps to find our way through the streets of this planet and chase cartoons using PokemonGO. It also brings with it a couple of inherent dangers that we need to be mindful of. Social media platforms like to attach locations to our posts, sometimes they ask us for permission, other times they do not. In order to avoid the following detail being attached to photos we post online or send to others we need to turn off location services for our smartphone/ digital device camera.

This is an Instagram post from a student who posted it with location services enabled for Instagram and the Camera.

How to Turn Off Geo-Location

On an Apple Device:
Go to Settings – Privacy – Location Services – Camera – Switch to **Never**

On an Android Device:
Open up your Camera – Tap Settings – **Turn off Location Tags.**
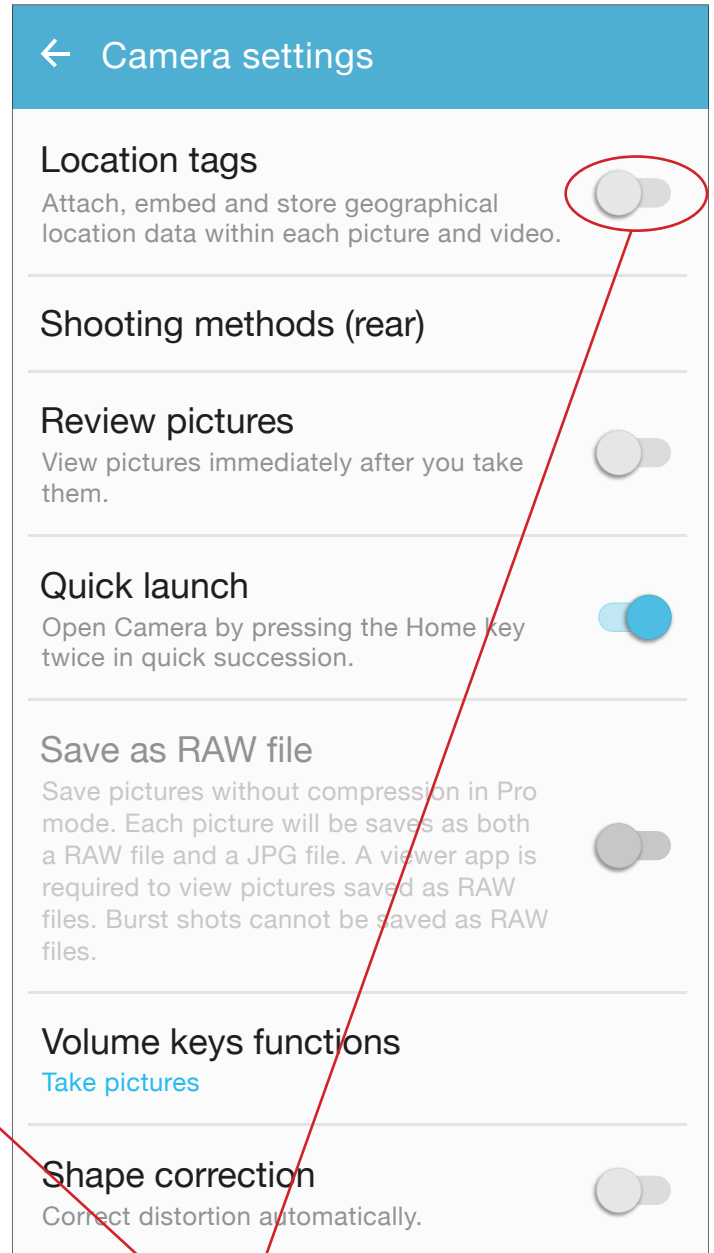
Turn off Geo-location

Discord

Discord is a free voice and chat messaging application that is available for both desktop and browser, as well as a mobile application (iOS and Android). Typically, Discord is used as a space for games to chat either by instant message, voice chat, or video chat.

Within Discord, users are able to create or join 'servers' where they can invite as many people as they would like to engage in chat together. Voice chat can be used as either open mic or push-to-talk, where others will only be able to hear you by enabling voice via the designated button on the keyboard or mouse. Users can also share their computer screens within Discord, which is especially popular when 'streaming' (a live video of the gameplay and/or webcam footage of the player).
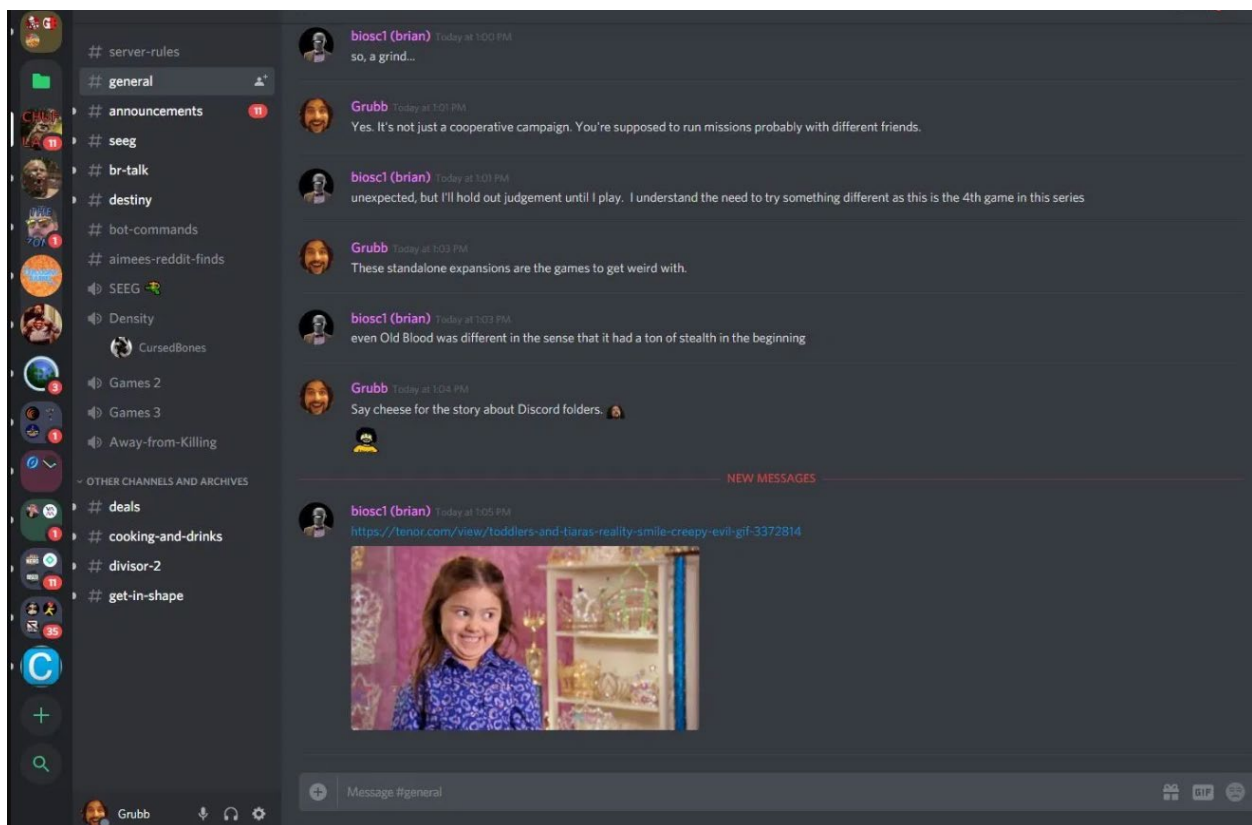
Discord is one of the only encrypted messaging applications which means everything that is posted or said through Discord is able to remain anonymous. Users are able to sign up without a verified email address and can use whichever name they want. Discord servers can be set up with different levels of privacy and security. Each Discord server has its own distinct web address (link) and can only be joined if that link is shared.

Twitch

Twitch is a video live streaming service that primarily focuses on video games. During a stream, there is a streamer who is the person conducting the broadcast, with or without live webcam footage, typically playing a video game. Watchers are able to chat by instant message to the streamer or other watchers in the stream's live chat log, in which other watchers can type back, or the streamer may respond by voice. 28 billion+ chat messages have been sent by using Twitch. The 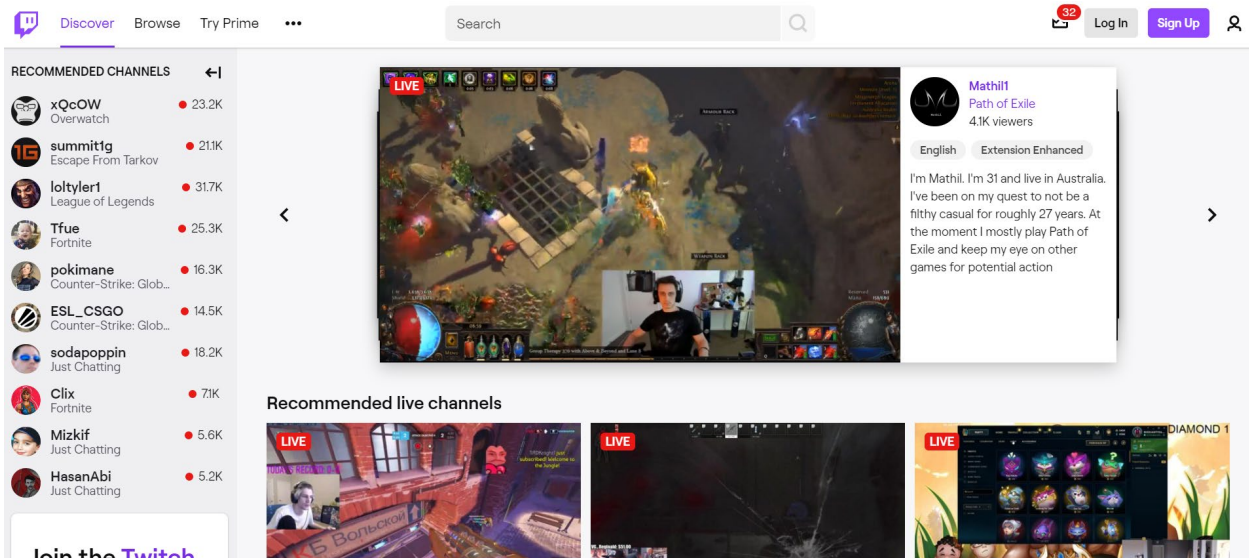average Twitch user can be found using twitch for 95 minutes per day which can include watching or streaming themselves, and an average of 46 billion minutes of stream watched per month throughout the world, which is shared between 3.7 million broadcasters.

Twitch is generally free to watch and following streamers is also a free feature, however there are certain paid subscriptions that you can use to give the broadcaster a set amount of money per month in order to support their stream, as well as single-time donation payments called 'donations' and 'bits. These can be purchased for real world currency through the Twitch website/app and spent within the site on any streamer/broadcaster.

Because Twitch is owned and operated by Amazon, any user with an Amazon Prime account is eligible for Twitch Prime and is given one free subscription pass (worth $4.99) per month. This can be used in the same way a regular subscription is used.

The "Rules" (that no one follows):

Popular Social Media Services User Minimum Age Agreements

Snapchat - 13 years old

WeChat - 13 years old

Twitter - 13 years old

Facebook Messenger - 13 years old

Facebook - 13 years old

Discord - 13 years old

Twitch - 13 years old

TikTok - 13 years old

Reddit - 13 years old

Pinterest - 13 years old

Tumblr - 13 years old

IMVU - 13 years old

Omegle - 13 years old *with parents' consent

YouTube - 13 years old *with parents' consent and 18 years old without

Periscope - 16 years old

Whatsapp - 16 years old

WeChat - 18 years old

Kik - 18 years old

Tinder - 18 *do not need Facebook login

Bumble (dating/friendship app) - 18

Hinge (dating app) - 18

Grindr (dating app for m+m) – 18

Internet, Texting, and Social Media Lingo and Slang (2020)

Lingo	Translation	Lingo	Translation
Lit	Cool/Awesome	**DTF**	Down To F***
Extra	Over-the-top	**Tho**	Though
Fire	Cool/Awesome	**Emo**	Emotional
Shade	Disrespectful manner	**VSCO Girl**	Girls that use VSCO
Go-Off	To hype someone up	**Mukbang**	Popular eating videos
Low-Key	Quiet/Modest	**WYA**	Where are you at?
Salty	Being upset over nothing	**Faded**	Drunk/Intoxicated
Stan	A crazed fan	**Fav/Fave**	Favorite
Thirsty	A synonym for someone who is sexually eager	**Oof**	Onomatopoeia when something bad happens
Tea	Gossip	**Cancelled**	Bad publicity
Shook	Shocked/Surprised	**FML**	F*** my life
Wig	Cool/Awesome	**KMS/KYS**	Kill myself/Kill yourself
Big Yikes	Uh oh	**Dead**	Funny/Unbelievable
AMA	Ask me anything	**FWB**	Friends with benefits
ASL	Age/Sex/Location	**GTG/G2G**	Got to go
ATM	At the moment	**GG**	Good game
Fit	Outfit	**Bet**	I agree
No Cap	No Lie	**Flex**	Showing off
BF/GF	Boyfriend/Girlfriend	**BFF**	Best friend forever
F4F	Follow for follow	**Slay**	Succeed
HundoP	100% sure about something	**Roasted**	To be dissed
Fierce	Awesome/Positive Spirit	**BTW**	By the way
Thicc	A sexualized term for a desirable body	**qq**	A texting term for crying
Squad	Group of friends	**Weak**	Amused
Finsta/Spams	A secondary social media account	**Yeet**	To discard an item at a high velocity
Cray	Crazy	**Mood**	Relatable
Cuffed	To be locked down in a relationship	**Deets**	Details
TBH	To be honest	**DGAF**	Don't give a f***
DM	Direct message	**RN**	Right now
GTFO	Get the f*** out	**HBD**	Happy Birthday

Handle	Social media username	**HMU**	Hit me up
Hella	A lot/really	**HBU**	How about you
NP	No problem	**IDC**	I don't care
IDK	I don't know	**IG**	Instagram
Snap	Snapchat	**IMO**	In my opinion
ILY/ILU	I love you	**IMU**	I miss you
JK	Just kidding	**LOL**	Laughing out loud
MOFO	Mother f*****	**Molly**	MDMA
NBD	No big deal	**Noob**	Inexperienced
NM	Not much/Nothing much	**NVM**	Never mind
OMW	On my way	**POV**	Point of view
PPL	People	**RT**	Retweet
Selfie	Picture of yourself	**Sick**	Crazy/Awesome
STFU	Shut the f*** up	**Stoked**	Excited
Story	Social media feature where you can add photos/videos that are viewable for 24 hours	**Swag**	Being or having something cool
YOLO	You only live once	**Troll**	Internet bully
TXT	Text	**TTYL**	Talk to you later
W/E	Whatever	**Taking a L**	Taking a loss
Cyber	Sex online	**WDYM**	What do you mean

For more internet, texting, and social media lingo and slang, visit UrbanDictionary.com *

*Please note that UrbanDictionary.com is not a certified source and may not represent the term in question appropriately. If you have any questions about lingo or slang and their respected translations, please call Safer Schools Together toll-free at 1-855-677-3720 or email info@saferschoolstogether.com .

Video Games

Video Gaming

Video games with mature content advisories used to be tightly policed by retailers across the continent using the ratings guide below, similar to age restrictions on R-Rated movies. Unfortunately, alongside the proliferation of technology growth and unlimited access to video content, enforcement of these ratings is non-existent. It's not uncommon to hear of some parents deciding to buy Grand Theft Auto for their 12-year-old when they've asked! Grand Theft Auto V has in-game exposures to graphic violence, sexual content, alcohol and drug abuse, and strong language.

The Bad News
Research generally suggests that prolonged exposure to violent video games can make people feel more aggressive, desensitized to violence, and feel less empathetic.

The Good News
Video games can provide a number of possible cognitive benefits including increasing response time performance and hand-eye coordination, practice in visual-spatial skills, stronger visual memory, becoming better at pattern recognition, and using trial and error to problem solve more often.

Moral of the Story
Content matters! As parents, we need to be involved in which games our children our playing. Enforcing time limits and self-regulation while minimizing the exposure to inappropriate and violent content is important. We want to reinforce pro-social games that can test and grow our childrens' creativity and enhance cognitive skills.

The Ratings guide from the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)

ESRB ratings have three parts:

- **Rating Categories** suggest age appropriateness
- **Content Descriptors** indicate content that may have triggered a particular rating and/or may be of interest or concern
- **Interactive Elements** inform about interactive aspects of a product, including the users' ability to interact, the sharing of users' location with others, if in-app purchases of digital goods are completed, and/or if unrestricted internet access is provided.

RATING CATEGORIES   CONTENT DESCRIPTORS

2020 Top 10 Most Violent Video Games

1. **Until Dawn**
2. **Mortal Kombat Series**
3. **Grand Theft Auto Series**
4. **Red Dead Redemption 2**
5. **God of War**
6. **DOOM**
7. **Resident Evil Series**
8. **Call of Duty Series**
9. **GORN**
10. **Hellblade**

We encourage parents to do their research on any video games before allowing your children to play them . A detailed description of all of the above games can be found through Google online.

Two of the most popular games played by our youngest children aged 4-13 are Roblox and Minecraft. Both of these games can be played in single player as well as Multiplayer Online. It is multiplayer mode that includes chat and messaging features, which parents should be aware of and involve themselves in.

ROBLOX

Roblox is a downloadable interactive game platform that allows users to play multiple types of games inside the Roblox world. It is a creative, lego-type sandbox style environment.
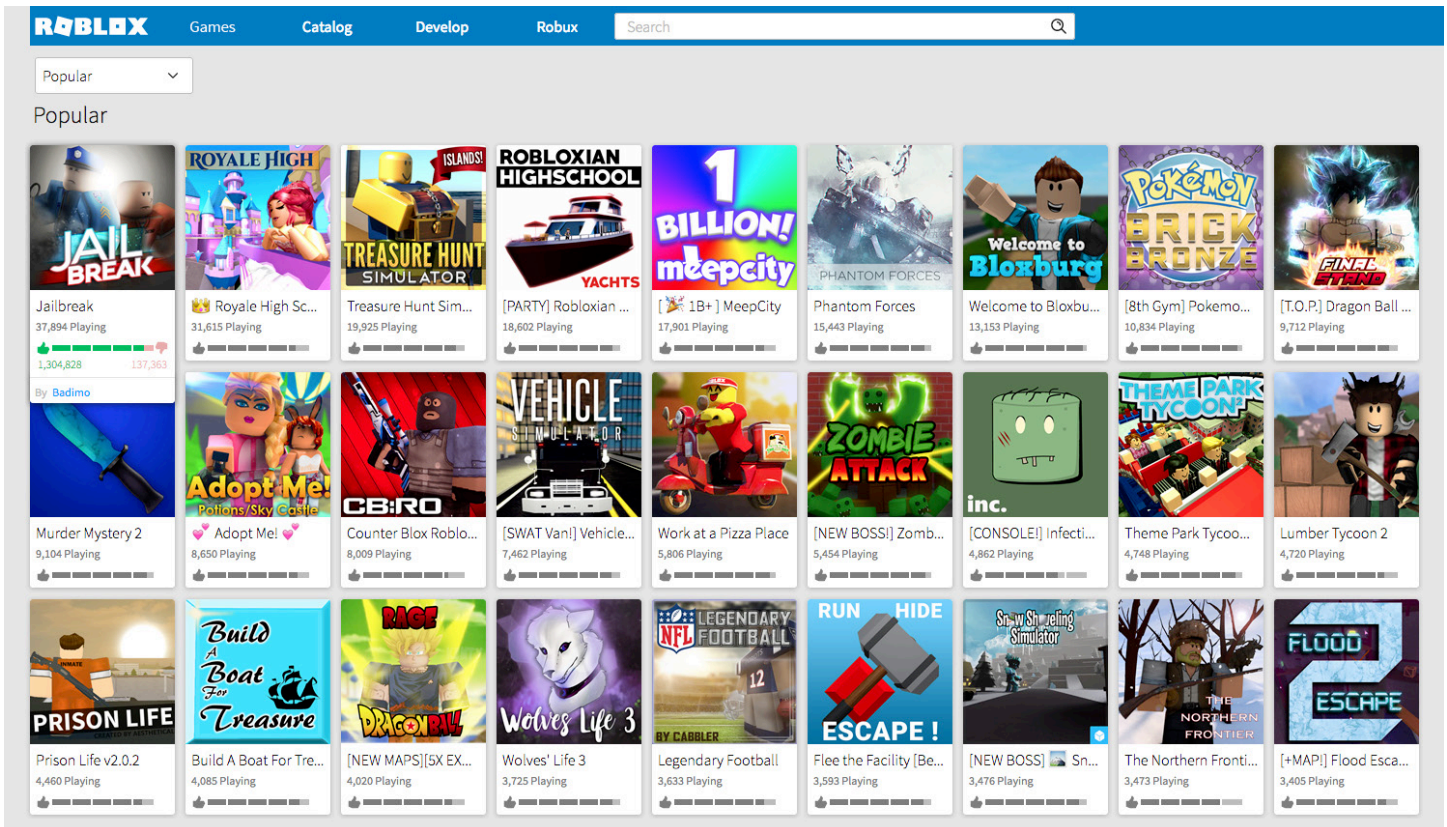
Roblox has built-in capabilities for friends lists, messaging users, and in-game chat. The chat function works differently depending on your age, for users 13 and under the chat is built off a list of "whitelisted" words, preselected by the developers as safe for children to use. If you are over 13 (or set your birthday so it appears you are) then chat is more open-ended, however there is still a built in "blacklist" function so curse words and derogatory terms are blanked out.

Swearing Example

Roblox privacy settings also permits us to control who is allowed to interact with our child. The user can adjust whether everyone, friends, or no one has access to communicate both inside games, and using the platform's message system.

By setting the appropriate age category and ensuring privacy settings are updated, parents can limit the interaction of users with the account.

My Settings

Privacy Settings

Contact Settings   ⑦

Default   ⌄

Who can message me?   ⑦

Friends   ⌄

Who can chat with me in app?   ⑦

Friends   ⌄

Who can chat with me in game?   ⑦

Everyone   ⌄

Other Settings

Who can invite me to VIP Servers?   ⑦

Friends   ⌄

Who can hoin me in game   ⑦

Friends   ⌄

Sidebar:
- Account Info
- Security
- Privacy
- Billing
- Notifications
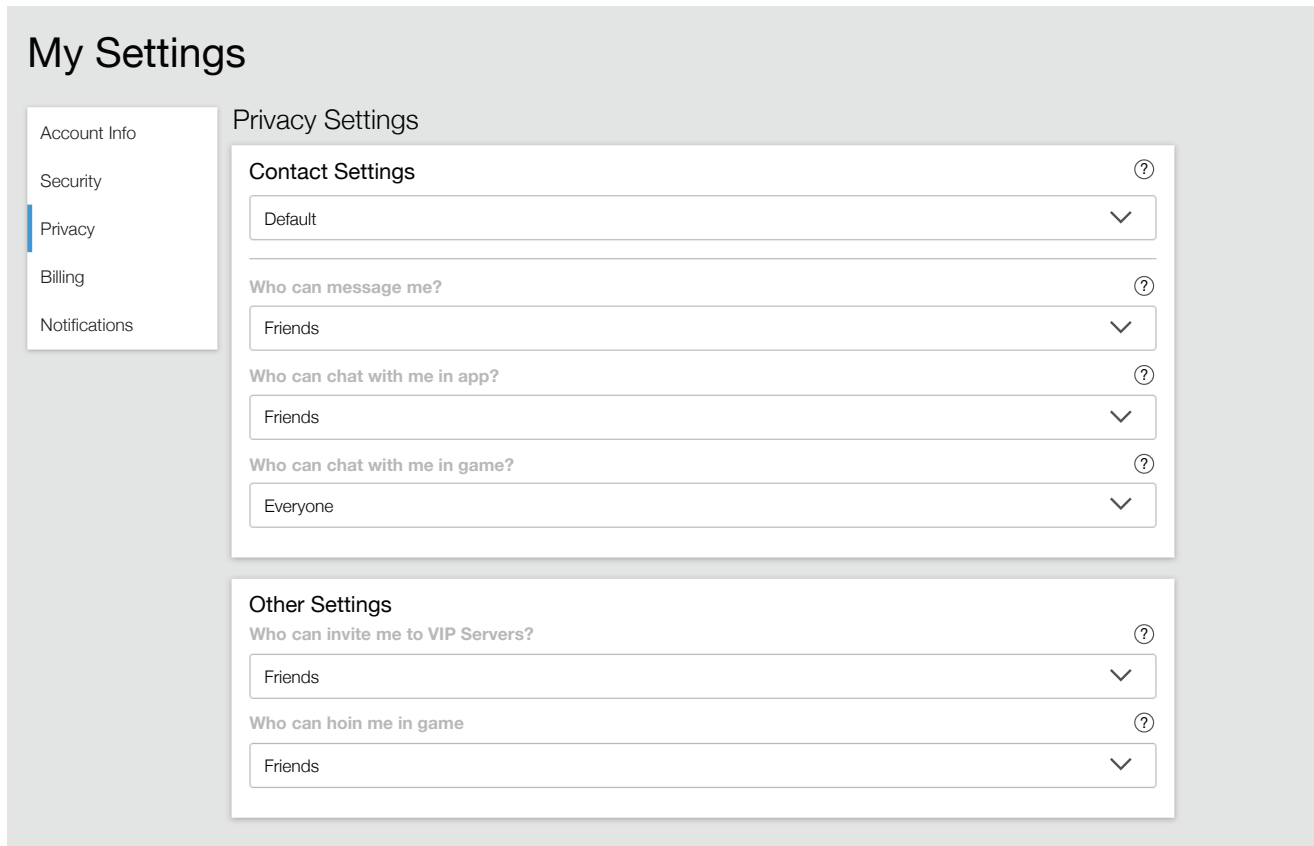
Minecraft

Minecraft is one of the most accessible video games available, as it has sold more than 50 million copies across PC, game consoles (Xbox and Playstation), and smartphones. It is very easy to learn and can be played from anywhere. It can be played either in the online world or offline. We have seen 4 year olds building Minecraft maps.

Game modes

Survival

The player can level up, search for resources, and craft different weapons or tools. They have to fight hunger, and monsters at night time.

Hardcore

Same mode as survival but the player only gets one life.

Creative

The user cannot die and has access to all the blocks and items available. With this, they can create whatever they feel like. The player also has the ability to fly to get from place to place faster.

Players online can work together to build some amazing creations. Each block had to be individually placed to create this.

An example of what a built house can look like.

Online Play and Chat

Multiplayer allows an individual to play alongside friends. They can build, mine, create, and even fight each other in some servers. All of the game modes that exist in single player exist in multiplayer, as well as the game difficulties. Players are always prompted to choose between single player or multiplayer. When playing multiplayer, the user must select the server they wish to play on. When playing on an open server the user can interact with anyone else. This includes the chat function as displayed below.

Online chat within the Minecraft environment.

Minecraft does have child friendly servers available, which you have to request to be added to. This ensures random players will not come into the server as they will not have access. Single player is the safest option, as no one can join or chat with a single player user.

Moral of the Story
Minecraft is an appropriate game for children to be playing, especially in Creative mode.

Fortnite

Fortnite is arguably the most popular video game available today with a estimated growth of 4% in 2020 bringing the gross revenue of the game to a whopping $124.8 billion dollars not long after the game's initial release in 2017 by Epic Games. Fortnite is available to download for free on PC, game consoles (Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo Switch, and as a mobile game on iOS as well as Android).

Game modes

Fortnite: Battle Royale

A Battle Royale game mode allows up to 100 players to compete in a player-versus-player setting. Players can play alone (solo), with a friend (duo), or in a group of 4 (squad). The objective is to pick up weapons (guns), ammunition, and bandages in order to kill off other players and be the 'last man standing'. Players are able to hide out in buildings and even collect resources to build their own structures and traps. The game type is much like that of lazar tag.

Fortnite Save The World

Fortnite Save The World allows 4 players to work together towards a common objective on various missions against zombie-like husks. Some of the objectives include fighting off the computer-generated "zombie-husks", save survivors, and defend equipment.

Fornite Creative

Creative mode in Fortnite is much like other Creative Modes which acts as a sandbox game that allows players to build maps with free reign on what to put in their game, different types of game modes, and game time.

Although Fortnite is technically 'free-to-play', it is important to note that Fornite is a game with microtransactions. Players can opt-in to purchase a game pass that gives them special items, allows them to earn certain achievements, and gives them 'loot boxes' which are boxes to open that include things such as special emotes, dances, and skins to use in-game. The currency in this game is called "V-Bucks".

Online Play and Chat

Players are able to communicate in-game through both a text chat function as well as a voice-chat function if a speaker and microphone are hooked up. Players are able to mute other players if they do not wish to hear from them, or can mute themselves if they do not wish to be heard. There is no moderation in either the text chat or the voice chat functions.

Moral of the Story

Fortnite should be played with close parental supervision by kids who are emotionally mature enough to handle the content of the game. Fortnite should not be played by children who are not at an age that is equipped to handle un-moderated text or voice chats.