



## social media apps of concern

As we make our way through the jungle of applications (apps) available on the various markets, there are some that have risen to the top in regards to inappropriate behavior and dangerous activity for children, teens, and young adults. As a parent attempting to monitor your child's activity, you should be aware of these apps; however, please understand that new apps become available daily. You never know when the "next best thing" is going to become your next worst nightmare. Beyond the apps I will discuss in this handout, you should also perform your own Internet searches and read reports from reputable agencies on a regular basis.



### **Facebook**

[It has become a word everyone knows] It seems that everyone has a Facebook account these days. For kids, it is more of a default than an option. Teens feel the need to maintain a profile even if they don't use it regularly. So, how do we handle this social media titan?

1. Work with your child to ensure adequate privacy settings are in place on their account. This will include ensuring their actual date of birth and age are reflected.
2. Look for "alternate" accounts. If your child is young, with the appropriate age set, Facebook will enforce certain privacy settings that your child may find cumbersome. If this is the case, they could resort to creating an alternate account of which you are not aware.
3. Insist on being "friends" with your child; however, **DO NOT ENGAGE TEENS ONLINE**. Posting dismay on their feed is the fastest way to get your child to find another way of communication. Simply monitor and keep your comments off of their feed. Talk to them face to face.
4. Surf their profile. Look at any and all information they post. Are they "in a relationship"? Are they commenting on posts that could be found offensive? Everything they post could potentially be found by a college recruiter or a potential employer.



## **Instagram**

[A play on instant telegram, but for photos] Instagram is extremely popular with teen girls for posting “selfies”. There are tons and tons of “duck faces” all over Instagram. One of the driving features of Instagram is the ability to edit and post photos from smartphones. So, what’s the issue?

1. All posts are publicly visible by default. You have to deliberately change the privacy settings. Ensure your child’s account is private.
2. Minors are often in sexually suggestive poses. Monitor what your child is posting and talk with them if they get a little too risqué. Please keep in mind that some teen girls may not see anything wrong with posting a picture of themselves in a bikini they were wearing at the pool party last weekend.
3. Pedophiles may be lurking. Since Instagram is open unless you turn on the Privacy settings, the pictures of the pool party could end up in the hands of some less than desirable people. Also, keep in mind that Photoshop is easy these days. I will let you contemplate the risks associated with that statement.



## **Twitter**

[You know, so you can “tweet” away] Twitter, the 140 character sensation that took the world by storm. You can instantly connect with anyone in the world. You can use the hash tag (#) to notate a common interest or theme (i.e. Congratulations to the #Seahawks on a fantastic #SuperBowl win!). You can use the @ symbol to direct your message to a person (i.e. @Pete Carroll, nice one!). I, incidentally, was cheering for the Broncos. So, what mischief could a child possibly get into with 140 characters? Quite a bit.

1. Twitter is used by celebrities and in quite a few cases, we have seen Tweets become their enemy. It is instant and permanent if retweeted.
2. Monitor what your kids are posting. You do not have to be “connected” to them to view the posts.
3. Be aware that photos and links can also be posted on twitter and, since anyone can see the photos, we are back into the Instagram situation above.



## **Pinterest**

[Stands for Pin an Interest] Pinterest is a virtual bulletin board for just about anything you wish. Sharing recipes is a common theme on Pinterest; however, there are also boards people use to “pin” pictures of cute puppies, share pictures of rare guitars, beautiful artwork, and the list goes on. Basically, it brings people together who share common interests and allows those people to share items related to those

interests in a highly visual layout with the ability to save and view content later. So, this is just wonderful, right? Yes and no.

1. Pinterest has attracted a fair share of pornography. Though you are not likely to stumble across the pornographic images without specifically searching it out, it is still an area to keep an eye on as a parent.



## ***Vine***

[As in grapevine] Vine is a 6 second video sensation. Before I get into the terrors of this application, let me give you the upside. It is fast and easy and allows you to share quick little moments of your life on a whim. Now for the downside... It is fast and easy and allows you to share quick little moments of your life on a whim.

1. Videos can be shared easily with various social media sites. As a parent, you need to check to see if your child is using Vine and discuss the ramifications of posting less than appropriate videos of themselves or their friends.
2. There is plenty of inappropriate content on vine including sex and drugs. Even if your child does not video themselves while partaking in such activities, it can be a place they can learn.
3. As with some other sites, Vine's privacy settings are not good. Beyond not being great, the privacy settings require constant attention. They can change without your knowledge. You must check them often.



## ***Reddit***

[As in read it, past tense] Reddit is an app that lets users submit links or text for everyone to see. The user posts are then voted up or down by other users. The things that are voted up become more visible on the site and, alternatively, the posts that are voted down become less visible. The premise is that, depending on what most people are into, you will readily see the most popular posts.

1. Reddit is more popular with boys. The items posted can be brash, crass, and insensitive. Children using Reddit can be lulled into thinking they should like certain types of posts because they are popular.
2. Also, the forum like interaction means teens and younger children can chat with anyone. Some of the conversations can turn sour.



## ***Tumblr***

[Shortened for Tumbler] Have you ever wanted to have your own blog? I bet your children do. Enter Tumblr, the site that allows anyone to have their own "micro-blog". Like other apps, you can find and follow things of interest and users have the ability to create collections that express their personality.

1. We have already discussed posting items of concern and Tumblr is no different in that respect.
2. There are large anorexia communities that glorify images of frighteningly thin girls. When surrounded by such numbers, young minds can begin to assimilate to the behavior and think of the behavior as the norm.



### ***Kik***

[Kik is fast becoming a common slang term, as in “Kik me” to mean send me a photo] Kik is a photo and video instant messaging app for smartphones. Like any other instantaneous image/video app, it can be dangerous. I will not list bullets under this one. Your child does not need Kik to send images of themselves, but this makes it easy. It is also another app to look for on their devices.



### ***Snapchat***

[Snap for pic and chat combined] Snapchat is much like Kik; however, this app is much more dangerous. It is my opinion that Snapchat was created for one reason only. That reason is to solicit nudity and other unsavory images and videos with the promise it will be destroyed within seconds of being viewed by the recipient.

1. Snapchat provides the illusion that content will be destroyed. Screen shots can be taken prior to destruction and those images are then permanent.
2. This can be a very dangerous app for teens who have moments of poor judgment. Lives have been destroyed by leaks of nude pictures.



### ***Pheed***

[A play on Feed, as in news feed] Pheed is another social media app that limits character input. With 420 characters available, you can say a bit more. Pheed is one of top apps in the iTunes store for iPhone and is becoming quite popular. You can also stream audio tracks and live broadcasts. The big draw for Pheed is that if your broadcast and posts become popular enough, you can charge a fee for access to your channel.

1. Kids know that stars can be born on YouTube. Wikipedia has a list of “YouTube personalities” you can browse through. It might be a good idea as a parent to keep an eye on what your child is willing to do to gain such stardom.
2. The chance to make a buck or two is also a big draw for unemployed teens and younger children. Most will not realize they need a bank account or PayPal account linked to actually get money.



## **Wanelo**

[Stands for Want, Need, Love] Wanelo is a shopping app that is very popular with teen girls. It's like window shopping on the Internet with all your friends. One good thing about Wanelo is that it is a great place to go if you want to find out what your teen wants for their birthday or Christmas.

1. The downside to this app is if you allow your child to order with an account tied to your credit card or bank. If you do allow that, keep an eye on your account.
2. As with other apps, teens can be influenced easily. Since you can put pretty much anything you want on Wanelo, they could "want, need, or love" some items of which you may not approve.



## **4Chan**

[A play on Fortune] 4Chan is a forum board similar to Reddit. The difference is that users do not need to create an account in order to post comments.

1. Online anonymity can bring out some pretty vicious behavior. Monitoring what your child is reading and posting can give you great insight as to how they act and what behaviors they are picking up on when you are not around.
2. You also should discuss virtual aggression with your teen and talk to them about how to handle insults and nasty comments.

The preceding information is my synopsis of an article that was posted on [www.today.com](http://www.today.com). You can read the full article here:

<http://www.today.com/moms/moms-you-oughta-know-11-social-media-apps-teens-are-6C10833314>



## **Omegle**

[Not sure the exact meaning, but the logo is a tilted Omega] Omegle is an online chat app that lets you chat with a complete stranger. When you are chatting, "You" represents what you type and "Stranger" notates what the other person is typing. Lawsuits have resulted in changes to Omegle that are supposed to tighten security.

1. Online Chat sessions can use video and swap pictures.
2. Unsupervised video sessions are available for those who are 18 and older. The problem is that children often lie about their birthdates when signing up.



## **Down**

[Stands for being “Down” to have sex. Formerly called “Bang With Friends”] Down is a “down”-right horrible plug-in for Facebook. The problem is that those without the plug-in never see any of the activity. I am going to jump right into the bad stuff because there is nothing good about it.

1. Allows users to “rate” friends as well as friends of friends. From a smartphone, you swipe up to signify you would date the person or swipe down to signify you would “get down” (have sex with) the person.
2. If the other person has the “Down” plug-n and they also show the same interest, both users are notified and they can “take it from there.”
3. Down used to be called “Bang With Friends”; however, they changed their name due to being blocked on iTunes. Don’t be fooled, it is the exact same app.

## **Instant Video Conferencing**

The following apps are all the same in regards to what they do and the risk involved. They are all wonderful tools for staying connected with family and friends; however, they also provide a child with the means of video conferencing with anyone they want in the privacy of a bathroom, their bedroom, etc.

1. Talk to your child about peer pressures and pressuring by the opposite sex when it comes to hormone riddled behavior.
2. There have been cases where teens have played truth or dare sessions using apps like Skype or Hangouts where multiple teens joined the call simultaneously. There are applications for computers that allow a user to record those sessions. Video snippets and still pictures can be taken from the recordings later and posted to the Internet.



## **Hangouts**

Google+ and Android devices.



## **Facetime**

Apple iPhones and other iOS devices.



## **Skype**

Mostly for computer, but mobile apps are available.