SOCIAL MEDIA APPS – BE AWARE As of 11.3.17

Those with \*\*\* are the latest Apps causing concern and making news.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **AFTER-SCHOOL \*\*\***  An anonymous app that creates a separate chat group for every school. It has been removed twice from the AppStore because of threats and arrests. Messages often include bullying, pornography, and alcohol or drug references. |
|  | **Ask.FM \*\*\*** - a social networking website used almost exclusively by kids where they can ask questions, with the option of anonymity. **Why it’s bad:** It creates a virtually consequence free forum of cyber bullying. There are nine documented suicide cases linked to Ask.fm in the UK and the United States. |
|  | **Audio Manager** has nothing to do with managing your teen’s music files or controlling the volume on his smartphone and everything to do the child hiding things. It’s one of the top apps for hiding other apps. When you press and hold the Audio Manager app, a lock screen is revealed — behind which users can hide messages, photos, videos, and other apps. |
|  | **What it is:** A “flirting” app allowing users to send photos and videos to anyone on their friends list and rate their hotness.  **Why it’s bad:** This app uses GPS and is not authenticated, so predators can find minors or anyone they are looking for. Popular for sexting, and “hotness” rating allows for bullying. |
| **CALCULATOR%** | **\*\*\***Learn more at <https://smartsocial.com/private-photo-calculator-app/>. This app is deliberately deceptive as the calculator works as a calculator, but it is designed to hide private photos and videos behind an unassuming calculator. Teens enter a passcode within the app to open a photo storage to hide photos. |
|  | **CHATROULETTE -** A video chat site that randomly matches you up with someone around the globe to have a video chat.  **Why it’s bad:** Very popular for cybersex and pornography, and it’s not uncommon to be randomly matched up with a chat partner who’s completely nude in front of their webcam. There’s nothing to stop the person you are chatting with from recording the video chat and posting it elsewhere. |
|  | **DOWN -** A dating app connected to Facebook.  **Why it’s bad:** It allows you to classify your friends into people you would be “down” with “hooking up” with, creating normalcy for a sexual hook-up culture for your child. |
|  | **FireChat** (free) is one of the new generation of apps that lets you communicate to nearby iOS devices without Internet or mobile phone coverage. Shows other people who are local to you. No logins or accounts required, and no setup. Everything is open. You have no way to filter who contacts you. |
|  | **HOT OR NOT -** A user must first set up an account of his own, with photos — and must verify his identity with a working email address or a Facebook account and a mobile phone number. Site says it will not accept a profile unless the user is 13 or older and that users 13 to 17 can’t chat or share photos with users older than 17, but there’s no age-verification process. Most concerning is the ability that girls (and boys) have to self-objectify them- selves by posting pictures for boys/men to rate as hot or not. |
|  | **HOUSE PARTY \*\*\*** A group video chat app, you are notified as soon as your friends are on and you can have a group or private, live conversation. However, if one person in the chat happens to be connected to a user and the others are not friends, those connections are still able to join the conversation because of the mutual connection. So kids who do not know each other **may be chatting with people they do not know**. Also of concern, is the ability to take a screenshot of the people you are chatting with, without them knowing about it. |
|  | **INSTAGRAM** – Fun/creative way to capture, edit and share photos, videos, and messages with friends and family. It has become a location for microblogging and is full of accounts linked to porn sites and porn stars. Many kids are also creating fake accounts - “finstagrams.” Sometimes these are simply accounts used for one’s closest friends, but they are highly used as a means of hiding an account(s) from Mom and Dad. |
|  | **KIK MESSENGER**  **-** An instant messaging app that allows anyone on the app to contact your child and directly message them. Can send videos, pics, and GIFs.  **Why it’s bad**: It’s very popular for sexting. There are no parental controls or authenticating, so it’s easy for predators to find your child on Kik. |
|  | Up-and-coming, all-in-one mobile hub for chatting, sharing photos/videos; free texting and video calls. Things can get dicey with the **hidden chat feature**; users can decide how long their messages can last (two seconds or a week). But kids can rack up some hefty credit card charges. While the app says minors need parent permission to use it, there’s no monitoring. Bottom line: If your kid doesn’t have a credit card #, you are controlling access to his in-app purchases. |
|  | **MARCO POLO \*\*\*** has been downloaded @ 10 million times on the Google Play Store, touts itself as a video “walkie-talkie.” You make a video and send it. In response your friend makes a video. All the videos live in a queue; you add a video when it’s convenient. It is a **closed messaging platform**, but friends can invite their friends. In theory, your kid can talk to strangers through the app’s messaging system. Another potential issue: The videos are easily deleted. So if your teen was sexually harassed or bullied through Marco Polo, chances are the user will delete the video and you won’t have proof. |
|  | **MEET ME -** app that uses GPS to allow users to meet new people who live nearby.  **Why it’s bad**: There’s no age verification, and your account is linked to Facebook so you and your location are easily identifiable to predators. The popularity rating makes seeking approval from strangers like a game. |
|  | **MONKEY \*\*\*** is a video-chat app for iPhone and iPad, and connects users around the world with like-minded individuals for 10-second video chats using their Snapchat usernames. A very popular app but opens kids up to sexual predators and sexually explicit content. |
|  | **MUSIC.LY -** This is a video social network app for video creation, messaging, and live broadcasting. Users can create videos and choose soundtracks to accompany them. The app also allows users to browse popular “musers,” content, trending songs and sounds and hashtags. Although the app administrators try to keep up with inappropriate or pornographic hashtags, many slip through or change too rapidly to be stopped. |
|  | **OMEGLE -** an anonymous text and video chat room that connects strangers to talk with each other. The app allows you to share personal information, and also contains inappropriate and unmoderated content. **Why it’s bad:** Although you don’t identify yourself, it’s pretty easy for your child to make friends with a predator. |
|  | **ooVoo -** video and messaging app. Parents should be aware that ooVoo is used by predators to contact underage kids. The app can allow users to video chat with up to twelve people at one time. **Why it’s bad:** While not terrible in itself, your kids MUST use the privacy settings and only let people who know them chat with them. Otherwise it’s stranger-danger city. |
| **POOF, HIDDEN APPS, HIDE IT PRO, APP LOCK** | **What they are:** These are all apps designed to hide other apps on your phone. Not all are available anymore, but if your child already has them, they can still use them.  **Why they’re bad:** These allow your child to conceal apps from their phone screen, so you will have to be diligent about searching for them. |
|  | **SARAHAH \*\*\***  Quickly becoming one of the most popular apps for cyber bullying. Sarahah allows users to leave anonymous feedback on other users’ profiles. Because users do not have to identify themselves in order to leave a comment, they often leave negative remarks about another person’s looks, values, or beliefs. |
|  | **SKOUT -** A flirting app used to meet new people.  **Why it’s bad:** Ages aren’t verified, and although there is a teen version with slightly more safety features, all you have to do to bypass it is put in a fake birthday. This leaves children open to the adult sector of Skout, which includes plenty of profanity, suggestive pictures, and private messaging with strangers who can see their location. |
|  | **SNAPCHAT -** A photo-sharing app that allows users to send photos to specific people, assigning the photos an allotted time—after which they will “disappear.”  **Why it’s bad:** Very popular for sexting. Users have figured out how to save or screenshot the images, so they aren’t really gone and can be used against the sender later for “revenge porn” or any other nefarious purpose. |
|  | **TINDER -** Used to find dates and hook-ups using GPS tracking.  **Why it’s bad:** It is easy for adults and minors to find each other, and the “rating” system can be used for bullying. |
|  | **VAULTY** will not only store photos and videos away from parental spying eyes, but it will snap a photo of anyone who tries to access the “vault” with the wrong password. Parents who find it on their teens’ phones can conclude: **Your kid is hiding things from you.** |
|  | **VOXER** is a 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. 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. |
|  | **VINE -** Allows users to watch and post six second videos.  **Why it’s dangerous:** While many videos are harmless, porn videos do pop up into the feed, exposing your children to sexually explicit material. You can easily search for/access porn videos. Predators utilize this app to search for teens and find their location. Then they try to connect with them via other messaging apps. |
|  | **WHISPER -** anonymous confession app.**Why it’s bad:** Since it’s “anonymous,” you can post pics and confessions of someone who isn’t you (bullying). It also uses GPS, so people—a.k.a. predators—can find you pretty easily. |
|  | **WISHBONE** allows the user to choose between two different options, particularly using pop culture. On a deeper level the user can send private messages to friends and create their own cards for comparison questions. This is perfect for online bullying or sexualized messaging. |
|  | **YELLOW\*\*\*** has been called “Tinder for Teens” (swipe right if you want to become friends with someone; swipe left if you don’t), opens with a geo-locator. As soon as two users swipe to accept each other, they are **automatically linked as "friends" on Snapchat** and can send each other photos right away - even if they don't know each other. 13-year-old age minimum - no way of verifying. Growing in popularity among teens who use it to chat and send pictures to friends and strangers. Easy to share inappropriate images/content. |
|  | **YIK YAK -** Allows users to post 200 character “Yaks” which can be viewed by the 500 people closest to them as determined by GPS. **Why it’s bad:** Users are putting lots of sexually explicit content on Yik Yak, and although it’s anonymous, it can reveal personal details that make users easy to find, especially with GPS. |

*This list gives you some of the numerous Apps that are causing issues among kids. This is not a complete list of Apps. Please go online to stay up-to-date on the latest social media trends among kids as it constantly changes.*

**SOURCES FOR LIST:** 1) <https://educateempowerkids.org/dangerous-apps-2017/>

2) [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-12-apps-that-every-parent-of-a-teen-should-know- about\_us\_56c34e49e4b0c3c55052a6ba](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-12-apps-that-every-parent-of-a-teen-should-know-%20%20%20about_us_56c34e49e4b0c3c55052a6ba)

3) **Common Sense**: Has a comprehensive list of Apps and explains what they do and what the concerns are. Go to <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/reviews/category/app/genre/social-networking-95>

4) NY Times Article (9/6/17) Recent Apps Causing Issues: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/style/teen-apps-bullying.html?_r=0>