

WHAT'S BAD ABOUT THESE APPS.....

SNAPCHAT: It's easy to use. Teens find it a fun way to stay in touch with close friends by sharing crazy photos while at the mall, at school (there are probably rules against that), or anywhere else. It's a digital communication tool and, as such, can be used for good or bad. Discussing appropriate use of Snapchat with your teens can help prevent problems if you decide to allow them to use it. Some teens assume that because video and photo texts or "Snaps" as they are called, disappear in just a few seconds the app is totally harmless. However, photos can be saved as screenshots. This is worrisome for parents because they have no control over what comes across their teenager's screen at any given moment. It also could become fodder for future cyber bullying.

MUSICAL.LY: The young users are able to post any type of video they would like as well as come into contact with strangers. Many young users may not know what is and isn't appropriate to post on social media. With that, they may publicly post their phone numbers or home addresses to a friend's comment wall, which could lead to a stranger gaining that information. Anyone can see these comments especially if the video you comment on has no privacy settings applied to it.

TUMBLR: The service allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users' blogs. It is not limited to specific users and their ages have many ranges.

FACEBOOK: On Facebook communication, it is possible that one might end up building up relationships with strangers, who can turn out to be criminals as well. Teenagers are vulnerable and are easily susceptible to outside influences. Their lifestyles are changing and want to build up relationships with people who are very hi-fi in their outlook. In this process, they try to communicate with strangers who perhaps can be very harmful to them. There is lack of emotional connectivity since one does not meet the other person. Feelings, when shared in person, have more impact than on Facebook. The feelings of care and warmth are there when the communication is face to face. There is a decrease in face-to-face communication. Face-to-face communication helps better messaging.

TWITTER: It's hard to maintain a professional image. It's horribly addictive.

MYSFACE: IT OBVIOUSLY BRINGS PERSONAL INFORMATION FRONT AND CENTER, ANYONE CAN VIEW IT.

INSTAGRAM: Kids and teens love using the photo-sharing app *Instagram* because it lets you apply cool effects and captions to your photos and videos and easily share them across a number of social media platforms. The ability to quickly change the look of your pics by adding anything from borders to blurring to brightness not only unleashes kids' creativity, it kinda makes their lives look a little more awesome. One of the biggest draws of *Instagram* is the instant feedback you can get. Collecting a large number of followers -- and flattering comments -- is a badge of honor for diehards. On the other hand, negative comments can be really hurtful. If your kid uses *Instagram*, make sure she knows how to comment respectfully and deal with haters. Parents also should know that, on *Instagram*, photos and videos are public by default and can contain location data. So it's important for kids to use privacy settings to limit their audience. Occasionally, negativity crops up, such as so-called "beauty pageants" where user photos are judged (and losers get a red "X" on their faces).

GOOGLE+: Teenagers' use of Google+ is no doubt bound to YouTube, where they feed a vast ecosystem of "celebrity" YouTubers.

WATTPAD: Wattpad is a site that provides a place for people to write and "publish" their own stories, novels, essay, plays—anything. When you publish a piece of work on Wattpad, all of your followers are notified and anyone can read it and make comments. This site is not a kids-only site. Also, this is a social media site, and like any social media site there's the risk of commenters who do not have your best interests at heart. Wattpad by its literary nature doesn't seem to be a huge attraction for trolls and meanies, though.

FANFICTION.NET: Once again the ability to connect with strangers and have others view postings and the accessibility to comment on those postings which may stir emotions.

ASK.FM: No one monitors the content on Ask.fm. The website states, "**The ask.fm service allows for anonymous content which ask.fm does not monitor.** You agree to use the ask.fm service at your own risk and that ask.fm shall have no liability to you for content that you may find objectionable, obscene or in poor taste." The website "is increasingly being used as a means to communicate abusive, bullying and sexualised content," according to Webwise. It "associated with some of the worst forms of cyberbullying" and **has been linked to numerous suicides** around the world, according to the Daily Mail. One user can block another user and must give a reason. Blocking someone, however, does not mean that they go away. **A blocked person can still access the profile to view all other interactions.**

OMEGLE: Launched in 2009, OMEGLE markets itself as an app where users can talk to strangers. When teens login, OMEGLE randomly pairs them with another user and allows them to chat together privately either through text, video, or using a built-in microphone. Even on OMEGLE's website, it clearly states “predators have been known to use OMEGLE, so please be safe”. The purpose of OMEGLE is to make new friends, connect with someone with similar interests, or just to pass the time.

VINE: Vine is a social video-sharing website and app that features six-second looping videos created by its users. The service is owned by Twitter and is similar to Instagram's video feature, but it's singular purpose sets it apart in a market crowded with all-things-to-all-people apps. Vine only does video -- and creators pack lots of entertainment value into those six seconds. Most Vines are designed to be funny, and many are staged for the camera. Kids and teens love to follow, comment on, and share their favorite Vines. In general, most of what you'll find on Vine is harmless. And some of it can be very creative. But you can easily stumble across iffy content, such as dangerous stunts, nudity, sex, drug use, offensive language, and more. The fact that the videos are so brief make them a bit easier to stomach. But Vine doesn't have a setting to filter out content. For younger kids, there's a curated version of the service called Vine Kids that serves up only age-appropriate content.

FRIENDSTER: Not what it once was, is merely ashes in the wake of Facebook, but it was once again a way to share information instantly to whoever the user wants to.

MOVIESTARPLANET: MovieStarPlanet is a free social interactive fantasy website created for children aged between 8 and 15 years old. Children get to choose from a variety of movie star characters, dress them up, choose their hairstyles, make movies, play games and chat. Parents have voiced concerns over the website, citing examples of children being sent inappropriate messages, accounts being hacked and children warned for reporting others. Parents also questioned the website's rewards for befriending strangers and options that allow players to be boyfriend or girlfriend.

WIKIA: Negative images are promoted, and this is a very opportunistic and judgemental app that can really diminish self-esteem for users.

BEBO: Bebo was the perfect platform for teenage gossip and drama to flourish. Your profile displayed your other half (BFF or BF? What a dilemma!), you could ‘share the love’, and

publically rank your friends in order of preference. With Bebo, cyberbullying was new and rampant.

FLICKR: Flickr describes as “advanced image recognition technology” to automatically categorise photos into a number of broad groups. Individuals submit pictures and those pictures are automatically tagged by category and subject content.

KIK: Kik Messenger, commonly referred to simply as “Kik,” joins Snapchat and Whatsapp as among the biggest and most widely used messaging apps in existence. Also called “chat apps,” messaging apps allow users to exchange text messages, videos, photos and audio messages with other individuals or as part of a group using wifi instead of traditional SMS. Kik stands out from other mobile messaging apps because its accounts are based on usernames instead of phone numbers, which makes it easy to remain anonymous. It also has a built-in browser, so users can access the Internet and share information without ever leaving the Kik platform. Users are supposed to be at least 13 years old and have parental permission if they are under 18. But as with all top messaging apps, there is no enforcement mechanism other than the honor system.

TINDER: People are not always who they say they are. Messages get sent to you that make you feel super uncomfortable. NOT TO MENTION, IT IS A DATING APP.

CALCULATOR%: IS AN APP THAT LOOKS LIKE A CALCULATOR, BUT WHEN A PASSCODE IS ENTERED IT IS AN APP THAT ALLOWS SECRET MESSAGING TO TAKE PLACE WITH WHOMEVER THE USER WANTS.

WHISPER: Whisper is an app that lets you “share your real thoughts and feelings, without identities”. Whisper prides itself so much on its anonymity that it assigns you a randomly-generated username when you first join, and you can change that username to anything you want at any time. What this means is that you could post a whisper, change your username immediately after and then post another whisper, and everyone would have no clue they’re from the same person.

HOT OR NOT: Launched in 2000, Hot or Not is a popular app where users can rate others on whether they’re physically attractive or not. Once an account is activated, new members must upload pictures of themselves that will be rated by others. Earlier versions of the app allowed users to give a numerical rating from 1-10 to judge a person’s attractiveness, however this has changed in the last few years. Now, users can browse through other members’ pictures and click on a heart icon to rate them as

hot or a “x” to rate them as not. If two members find each other attractive, the app will automatically allow them to privately message each other. There is also a location-based feature that allows users to see and rate other profiles of only people who are located nearby. Hot or Not allows users to search for other people nearby using filters such as education, body type and relationship status.

BURN BOOK: You search for "communities" — schools — near your location, and once you join a community you're free to post anything on any topic. The Burnbook blurb suggests "Jokes, fails, wins, sightings, shout outs, revelations, proclamations and confessions — they all happen on Burnbook. Together, we can keep a secret." Crucially, it's anonymous. You don't need to sign in, and you don't create a username. As a result, Burnbook gives kids the ability to pick a name, and open up anonymous judgment from the community.

WISHBONE: Our go-to app for comparing anything your heart desires! Wishbone covers everything from fashion, celebrities, humor, music and pretty much anything you can think about” (copied from the iTunes App Store). This also involves just straight voting thumbs up or down on images. **Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity. Infrequent/Mild Simulated Gambling. Infrequent/Mild Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References. Infrequent/Mild Realistic Violence. Infrequent/Mild Horror/Fear Themes. Infrequent/Mild Cartoon or Fantasy Violence. Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor. Infrequent/Mild Mature/Suggestive Themes. Pornographic comparisons are easy, easy to find. The app doesn't use hashtags, which hinders a search for inappropriate content using keywords, but by digging into user accounts. Zero monitoring – there aren't services that monitor Wishbone nor are there any parental controls in the app to filter inappropriate surveys. It can be used without creating an account. This is unusual among social media-like platforms, but it is true with Wishbone.**

YELLOW: yellow is a new app for cellular phones that is aimed directly at teenagers. Its icon is an innocuous yellow square on a device's home screen, but the app behind this icon should be cause for concern among parents. The app allows users to see pictures and profile information of other users who live near them. Like Tinder, a user swipes right if they like a profile and left to reject one; if two users both “like” each other's profiles by swiping right, their Snapchats become connected and they are able to swap pictures.

