

Day One

Online Child Exploitation

In our ever-changing technological landscape, internet safety is a vital priority in ensuring the healthy lives of children. It is important to know what children are doing online, what technologies exist that can potentially leave them vulnerable to exploitation and to have honest conversations about online safety. There are a few distinct elements in online applications that are concerning to maintaining online child safety.



Livestreaming/Video Chat

Many apps center around providing a platform where users can broadcast their lives live to online viewers. Broadcasters can feel pressured to do things that make them feel uncomfortable in response to viewers' comments and with the goal of putting on an entertaining "performance."



Location Sharing

Many apps access your location via GPS. While some apps may only provide information about your general vicinity to other users, some apps can be far more specific. Many apps also encourage users to seek out contact with other users in their area which could jeopardize children's physical safety.



Gift Giving Systems

Some apps have created systems within their platforms which allows users to exchange gifts. This can be something as trivial as a special emoji, but some apps have gifting systems that are redeemable for actual cash. Gift giving is a known grooming strategy for those targeting children, making these systems especially concerning.



Temporary Messages

Some apps have created messaging systems where messages self-destruct after a set period of time. Thinking that there is no permanent record of their online activity, children may behave more impulsively online. Unfortunately, there are still ways for their online activity to be recorded by other users which leaves them vulnerable to exploitation. These systems also prevent parents from being able to accurately monitor their child's online activity.



Open Forum/Large Groups

Many apps create an open forum where users are able to interact globally with any other user of the app. While some make private profiles available, they are not the default setting. Others allow for interaction between members of large groups, all of which children may not be familiar with.



Dating Connotations

Some apps make it clear that their purpose is to facilitate dating relationships through their name, icon or description. However, some may be more vague in their presentation. Some may also describe themselves as an app to find new friendships, but use of the app often reflects a dating motive.



Random Connections

Some apps facilitate random connections between users. These are often unpredictable, although some provide information to users before making the connection. These connections make children vulnerable by exposing them to unknown users who may take advantage of the surprising nature of the encounter.




























































































Reports of Grooming/Inappropriate Requests

Reviews of these apps indicate user experiences that reflect attempts by others to groom young users into an exploitative relationship or who otherwise made inappropriate requests of users. This may involve the request of pictures, more private chats, keeping their interactions a secret, or asking the user to engage with them on another, more private app.

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Below is a collection of popular apps that contain elements concerning online child safety. Each of the previously discussed elements the app contains is indicated to the right of the app icon. This collection of apps is by no means exhaustive, as new apps are created everyday. It is important to be vigilant in monitoring online child safety and updated app reviews from experts, parents and children can be found at www.common sense media.org.

Amino	Skout
  	   
BIGO Live	Snapchat
    	 
Hype	Spotafriend
  	   
Kik.	Tango
   	     
Line	Telegram
   	  
Live.ly	Viber
    	  
LiveMe	WeChat
    	    
MeetMe	WhatsApp
   	   
Monkey	Whisper
   	   
Music.ly	Wishbone
  	  
MyLOL	YouNow
     	    
Periscope	Yubo
