



MEOWCHAT—has a distinctive look which includes cartoon cats and allows users to send texts, images or audio clips. It encourages chatting with 'like-minded' strangers based on the user's location at any time. MeowChat's minimum sign up age is 13, yet chatrooms can contain bad language and invitations to private chats with strangers.

ASK.FM – an app which allows users to ask a specific person anonymous questions. Users can answer these questions and post them to their personal page, truly leaving nothing to the imagination.

This is especially dangerous because it allows any user to target a specific person anonymously. Bullies, predators, and more can send anonymous messages to a specific person, asking them inappropriate things or even simply making hurtful statements.



What is an app?

(taken from www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/27488178)

App is short for application - this can be any type of computer program. Applications have been around for as long as computers, but the term 'app' is associated with the software that runs on a smartphone or tablet device. Apps are usually accessed by clicking or tapping on an icon on the home-screen of your smartphone or tablet. This means you don't need to search for a program or key in the address of a website. Many companies make their software available in app form - making it easier for customers to find and use their services. Apps cover a whole range of different type of activities. The most popular are games, news, weather and social networks. Many apps make use of the built-in features of the smartphone such as the camera or GPS - which is used for location-based services and maps. Smartphones and tablets come ready loaded with basic apps, like a browser, calendar, email and chat software, but many more are available for free or at low cost.



This advice leaflet was created in January 2017.

New apps are created daily; it is important that you are aware of, and keep up-to-date with, the apps and online content the young people in your care are accessing.

If school is made aware of any new apps that are particularly concerning we will inform parents either via letter or text message.

Some information within leaflet taken from:

www.huffingtonpost.com

www.familyeducation.com



APP

ADVICE

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Guidance, information and advice about apps which adults should consider monitoring use of in young people



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We have compiled information on some apps that we feel adults may wish to monitor use of with the young people in their care. This list does not include all such apps, however will hopefully give you an insight into the types of apps children are showing interest in. We have not included Facebook or Twitter, as they are more well-known, but we advise that children of a primary school age should not be using these sites as they are rated 13+.

ROBLOX - a user-generated gaming platform where you can create your own games or play games that other users



have made. There is also the option to chat to other players. Users have reported that content is unsuitable for younger people, with violence and adult content.

Dubsmash - a video messaging app where people can upload themselves singing over famous songs and then choose to share via Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram or via a text message. It is not intended for children under 18 and you must be 18 or 13 years or



older with parental permission to use it. There is also a questions and answers site about the app which talks about Dubsmash 2. Dubsmash 2 has nothing to do with the Dubsmash app as it is a malware app that hides itself on phones and then pushes users to adult content sites. As soon as it is set up, the icon deletes itself and runs it in the background.

Omegle – an app where users can chat with random strangers; it's all anonymous.



Users can chat about anything as content is not moderated.



Yik-Yak – an app where all users are anonymous apart from their location. Posts are called 'Yaks' and show in a live feed for other users (Yakkers) in

their area. The app's content-generation and moderation is entirely in the hands of its users (who can 'vote' posts up or down in the news feed; after two "down" votes, a Yak disappears). The app is rated 17+ and targets students, who can use it to spread the word about parties and events or share their thoughts. But younger users are easily getting their hands on the app and using it to post hurtful comments, threats and rumours about their peers.

Tumblr – a photo-sharing app that can also share videos and be used for chatting. Users can easily



access inappropriate content, including violence and adult material. Privacy settings are difficult to set up.



Kik Messenger - an app that people can use to text with friends at high speed and with more of a 'face-to-face feel' than regular texting (users' profile pictures appear in a little bubble next to their text, and they can quickly text photos,

sketches, or even pre-designed greeting cards to individuals or groups). The app is rated 17+, but there is no age verification so anyone can download it. Like some other instant messenger apps, Kik allows your child to connect with others using just a username (rather than texting from their phone number). The app also been connected with cyberbullying.

Voxer - an app which 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. Although it largely has an adult following, including some people who use it for their job, it's becoming popular among children who enjoy its style of texting and talking. Hurtful messages from cyberbullies can be even more biting when they're spoken and can be played repeatedly. Surprisingly, the app is rated 4+.



Snapchat - an app that allows users to send photos and videos that disappear from view within 10 seconds after they're received. It's rated 12+. Some children are using the app to send inappropriate pictures because they believe the images can't be saved and circulated.

However, Snapchat pics don't completely disappear from a device, and users can take a screenshot before an image vanishes in the app.

Vine - Twitter's mobile app that allows users to shoot and share short video clips. It's rated 17+, but children and teens are still downloading it. As with any multimedia app, the content on Vine includes content that is highly inappropriate for young people.



Shots of Me or Shots Studios – a 12+ 'selfie-only' photo-sharing app which has an 'anti-trolling' aspect; it does not have a comment section under photos posted on the app. Instead of a public comment area, the app has a direct-messaging feature where users can only send private messages to one another. The content of these direct messages is unmoderated. The app shows a user's location and how long ago a photo was added unless those features are managed in the app's settings.

Whisper - This 17+ app's motto is: "Share Secrets, Express Yourself, Meet New People." Whisper lets users set up anonymous accounts to make their messages or confessions overlap an image or graphic (similar to e-postcards), which other users can then like, share, or comment on. While it allows for creative expression, it can also take overly personal content viral. The app also shows a user's location. Although the app is geared toward older teens and adults, younger children are finding their way to it.



Audio Manager – an app that has NOTHING to do with managing audio. It is an app that hides photos, videos and other apps behind an icon for 'Audio Manager'. If your child has this app, it is highly likely they are hiding content within it.

Calculator% (Private Photos) - as with Audio Manager above, this app is simply a 'dummy' icon that hides other content.



Line - an all-in-one mobile hub for chatting, sharing photos and videos; free texting and video calls too. There is a hidden chat feature and users can decide how long their messages can last (two seconds or a week). The app also has some in-app charges and although the app says that children need their parents' permission to use it, there is no monitoring to ensure this takes place.



Instagram - popular photo-sharing site owned by Facebook. Users can add 'cool' filters or create collages of their photos and share them across Facebook and other



social media platforms. The app is rated 13+, but users can still find mature or inappropriate content and comments throughout the app. 'Trolls' — people making vicious, usually anonymous comments — are common. A user can change the settings to block their location or certain followers, but many users are casual about their settings, connecting with people they don't know well or at all.



Live.Me - an app where you can connect and share via live video. Concerns relate to its function to share content in real time with strangers and the ability to share these on social media.