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All the world's a stage

Vlogging, Livestreaming
and Parenting in 2018

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Introduction

Internet Matters

Internet Matters exists to keep children safe online. Earlier this year (2018) parents told us that in addition to the typical online safety concerns around content, contact and conduct, they were beginning to be concerned about newer emerging challenges for their children associated with livestreaming and vlogging.

As a result of that insight, we commissioned this research to better understand the opportunities presented by vlogging and livestreaming, and also to obtain greater insight into parents' concerns.

One of the most interesting findings is the division of opinion between those parents who vlog or livestream themselves and who encourage or support their children to do the same, compared with those who do not, and have significant levels of concern about it. Older siblings are also a key factor in introducing children to content creation.

Of those parents who are engaged in vlogging and livestreaming, the creativity of content creation, both as a part of childhood in a digital age, and as a life skill shines through.

However, threaded throughout this report is the reality that most parents are unaware of the potential risks of livestreaming and vlogging, and therefore are unlikely to be equipped to have the necessary conversations with their children which could help them use this technology smartly and safely. Informed by the request for simple actionable advice, Internet Matters has created a suite of resources for parents – available on our website – to help them support their children who vlog and livestream.

Carolyn Bunting
CEO Internet Matters

Huawei

Through our partnership with Internet Matters we are pleased to sponsor this independent research study. This is part of our ongoing relationship with Internet Matters, in the furtherance of our shared goal to keep children safe online.

The use of video to express creativity, opinions and share content with friends and family is on the rise. Video accounted for 61% of mobile data traffic in 2017 (Source: IHS Markit Feb 2018, Video as a Core Service for Telcos) and the desire to watch and create this content starts in childhood. Children have long used imitation and role play as a way to express themselves, and in this digital age the desire to do so and to do it online, is becoming ever stronger.

As a responsible technology company with a suite of phones and tablets in the UK market, Huawei is very pleased to partner with Internet Matters to help parents better understand the opportunities presented by vlogging and livestreaming and to better mitigate the risks. In common with Internet

Matters we recognise that the internet provides fantastic opportunities for children, and we have a responsibility to educate parents to help them keep their children safe online.

Who is Huawei?

Huawei is a leading global information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider. Driven by responsible operations, ongoing innovation and open collaboration, we have established a competitive ICT portfolio of end-to-end solutions in telecom and enterprise networks, devices, and cloud computing. Our ICT solutions, products, and services are used in more than 170 countries and regions, serving over one-third of the world's population. With more than 170,000 employees, Huawei is committed to enabling the future information society, and building a Better Connected World.

Jerry Wang
CEO Huawei UK

Executive Summary

This paper is part of the on-going dialogue Internet Matters has with parents. Through our constant conversation we are able to understand what parents are concerned about and provide resources to help them have those crucial conversations with their children about how to stay safe online.

Our research demonstrates that vlogging and livestreaming is new news for most parents, and many are unaware of the opportunities and risks that children and young people face. Given that over a quarter of children aged 6-10, and around a third of tweens aged 11-13, regularly or sometimes livestream, this research, and the subsequent resources we have created, are timely.

Some parents recognise there are creative opportunities and technical skills to be learnt through vlogging and livestreaming and want to support their children to do that well. Other parents – who neither vlog nor livestream themselves – are significantly more cautious and substantially more unwilling to let their child engage in these activities.

Whilst parents make decisions for their children based on a wealth of factors, the key priority is to provide simple, actionable resources for parents, so that they are equipped to have the relevant conversations to keep their children safe online. You can see our resources at the end of this report.

Methodology

We work with Trinity McQueen, a MRS registered research house. All participants were carefully screened to ensure they met the required criteria to take part and were suitable for this research.

An integrated approach was undertaken for the research:

1. Quantitative survey to provide robust data:

- A 20 minute online quantitative survey completed by 2,000 parents of children aged 4-16 years old in the UK
- A nationally representative sample from a consumer access panel

2. Qualitative video interviews to provide depth:

- 30 minute video interviews with 10 parents of children aged 10-16 years old who are regular watchers and creators of vlogs and or livestreamed content.
- Recruited from North, South and Midlands locations across England

Contents

The report covers the following;

- Vlog and livestream behaviours; what children are doing, where and why
- Positives associated with vlogs and livestreams
- Risks, concerns and negative experiences
- Providing parents with support; information needs

The research focuses on understanding parental views towards **vlogs and livestream videos being watched and created** by children aged 4-16

The following terms are used in the research and throughout this report:

Terms	Definitions
Vlogs	Video content published on social media (e.g. YouTube) on a regular basis by an individual (or vlogger) or brands, e.g. Zoella. Some individual vloggers are also sometimes called 'YouTubers'.
Livestream	A video being broadcast live via the Internet from a specific location. It is possible to do this using sites/apps like YouTube, Facebook Live, and Live.ly. Livestreaming is different to video chat services like Skype, as the videos can be watched by many more people.

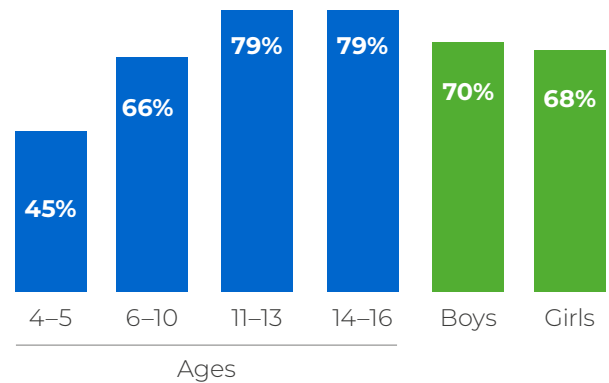
Vlogging and livestreaming behaviours:

What children are doing, where and why



“They watch friends doing whatever is cool at the time. At the minute it’s all about making slime and sharing it online.”

Parents tell us that 70% of children regularly or occasionally watch vlogs – with numbers rising as children become teenagers. The gender split in terms of watching is marginal, although what boys and girls watch does change.



Watching vlogs

Overall, the most popular platform used to watch vlogs is YouTube (by 60% of households with children aged 4-16 years old) with video gaming (45%) being the most viewed type of vlog among children who watch any.

Differences by age

Topics of most interest for children at the younger age range of 4-10 are unboxing vlogs, in which children their age open gifts, or toys/tech products, or vlogs created by their friends. In contrast to younger children, those aged 11-16 prefer to watch professional vloggers rather than their friends.

There are further differences within this age range as those aged 11-13 also watch vlogs that tap into a broad spectrum of their hobbies and interests, whereas those aged 14-16 prefer to watch fashion and beauty or professional vloggers and gaming specific vlogs instead.

Differences by gender

There are also notable differences between the types of vlogs being watched by boys and girls, reflecting general differences in interests between the sexes. Gaming and unboxing vlogs are the most popular amongst boys, while girls have a preference to watch professional vloggers or fashion and beauty vlogs.

What else do we know?



44%

Of parents feel their child has learnt good things by watching vlogs/vloggers



33%

Of parents think many vloggers are good role models for children



2 hours

The average amount of time spent watching vlogs per week

“My son streams football sometimes and I didn’t realise it but people can comment at the side of the video as they watch. There was loads of swearing and putting players down which made me uncomfortable.”

Watching livestreams

Although watching livestreamed content is not as common as watching vlogs, around 2 in 5 parents believe their children are watching them. Livestream content is spontaneous and in-the-moment; this is a key motivation for watching it. There is an excitement and anticipation that it can go wrong or have funny consequences, which makes it more enticing compared to edited vlogs.

Differences by age

As with vlogs, gaming is the most popular content being livestreamed across the 4-16 age range. This tends to be footage of their screen whilst they play as opposed to individuals staring in the video. For younger children aged 4-10 they also watch

unboxing and toy tech livestreams as well as TV/film content, for example, episodes of Peppa Pig. For older children the differences become more apparent. As well as watching gaming content, those aged 11-13 are also watching their friends’ livestreams, whereas 14-16 year olds are more likely to watch livestreams from musicians/bands.

Despite parents being aware of their children and livestreamed content, parents admit they don’t know enough about this topic. As such, it is not always easy to make a judgement as to whether everything the child is watching is suitable for someone of their age. For this reason no vloggers or livestreams are off limits within the home, however, parents welcome more information to help them make an informed decision of what is appropriate for their own child.

What else do we know?



69%

Agree that it’s difficult to know whether certain vlogs/vloggers are suitable for children



9

The average age of the youngest child in a family to start watching livestream videos



1½ hours

The average amount of time spent watching livestream videos per week

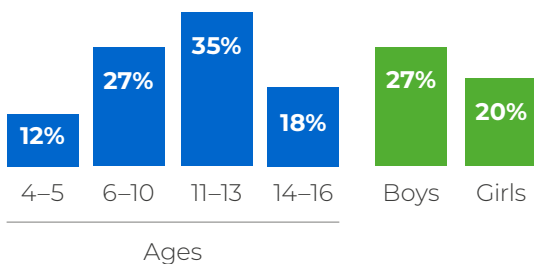
“My daughter watches this American vlogger and then she makes her own and basically puts on an American accent. She and her friend just find it really funny!”

Creating vlogs and livestreams

Parents tell us that nearly a quarter of children create and post vlogs regularly or occasionally – although this is unevenly spread over the age ranges. Significantly more boys than girls do this, with one fifth of girls creating vlogs and over a quarter of boys doing so.

Parents claim their child will often watch a vlog or livestream and then try to recreate it themselves.

Children who create & post vlogs regularly/occasionally

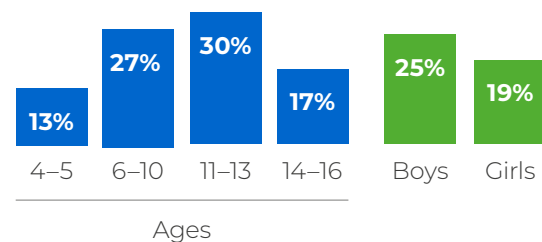


This suggests children are to some extent mimicking the content they have viewed and playacting. They are seeking inspiration from this for role playing.

Differences by age

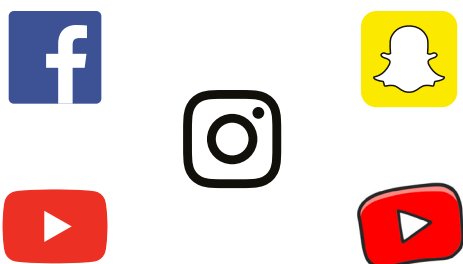
Creating content starts at an early age. Younger children, under the age of 10, seek permission from parents and tend to ask them for help in setting up accounts where they can create and share content. Older children, aged 11+, create and share content within their existing accounts on platforms already being used.

Over a fifth of children (22%) either regularly or occasionally create and livestream content:

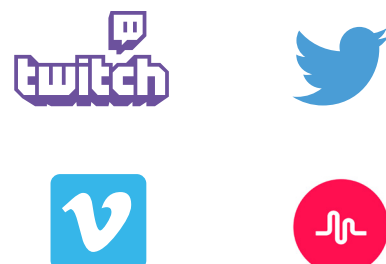


According to parents, children are using a range of platforms to create vlogs:

Most popular platforms being used



Also being used but to a lesser extent



“My son thinks YouTube Kids is for babies, but he’s only 11 himself”

It’s interesting to note which sites parents identify as most popular platforms for creating vlogs as it indicates a level of confusion and misunderstanding on what can be done on each platform.

This can be explained in part by product evolution and the challenges of keeping up with popular platforms. So, for example, Snapchat is included, even though you can’t really vlog on Snapchat in the traditional sense (i.e. build up a video archive that people can watch over time). Instead you can ‘Go live’ on the platform and post these in your ‘stories’, but these can only be viewed for 24hrs before they are deleted (or you can save them in your own Snapchat Memories to repost at another time).

Likewise, **Instagram** has a new functionality where you can now record 1hr long videos to promote on the app, and these can be viewed on both mobile and desktop. You can also ‘Go live’ like the other platforms and the video can be edited afterwards and saved.

On **YouTube Kids** you can watch vlogs that have been curated (from the main YouTube platform) for the different age groups but you cannot ‘Go live’, comment or post videos on the app. It is purely a platform where you can choose what you watch, and search for new kids content that interests you.

Although parents are aware of YouTube Kids, they felt it was too restrictive, as those with children wanting to create vlogs and livestream to share publicly were unable to do this. Therefore some parents ultimately gave in to ‘pester power’ and let their child use the general YouTube platform instead.

Similar platforms are claimed to be used when creating livestreamed content:

Most popular platforms being used



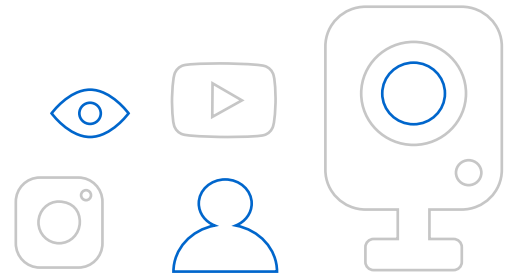
Also being used but to a lesser extent



younow



live.ly



Creating livestream videos declines as children get older

We asked a number of parents whose children livestream why interest in this declines as the child becomes older, around the ages of 14-16. The top three reasons given were:

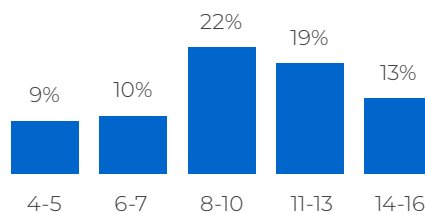
1. They have a limited amount of time as **other activities take priority** and compete for their time. Impending exams means parents are restricting the amount of time children are allowed to spend online.
2. There is a feeling that **children have been there and done that**. Although livestreaming is a relatively new concept for parents and they feel they have a lack of knowledge about it in general, children are getting bored of it by this point. They develop other hobbies and interests to take up their time. Greater freedom from parents also means they have greater independence and opt for seeing friends rather than being restricted to activities within the home.
3. Some parents felt that **14-16 year-olds are potentially more self-conscious vs. younger children**, which can also help to explain the decline. Younger children's videos typically consist of them playing, singing or just showing off, fearlessly and without inhibition. For older children there is a concern about how they will be perceived, and any potential negative reaction, which could then have an impact on their social life and friendship circle.

What else do we know?



8.7

The average age of the youngest child in a family to start **creating vlogs**



Those parents with one child who creates livestreams by age



8.5

The average age of the youngest child in a family to start **creating livestream videos**

Positive Experiences

Positives associated with vlogs and livestreams

Parents feel creating vlogs and livestreams can have a positive impact on their child. Although vlogs and livestreams are likely to be introduced to children by older siblings or peers rather than parents, parents are happy to encourage this even at a young age.

Parents we spoke to - where their children were vlogging and livestreaming - felt creating them is an extension of play. Where children often played by pretending to be movie stars or TV characters, they are now playing by pretending to be TV celebrities or vloggers as well. Parents are happy to encourage this for a number of reasons:

- These parents recognise that **technology is rapidly changing and is very much at the forefront of everything we do**. It is inevitable and unavoidable. Therefore, becoming familiar with the latest technology is a valuable part of their child's development and means they are not left behind their peers.

- It provides a **creative outlet and space where children can express and showcase their talents**. This is something parents value and want to nurture especially if their own child is not particularly academic but instead demonstrates a strong ability for the Arts. Although parents are not suggesting their child will grow up to be a vlogger per se, it does enable children a chance to explore their skills. This can be developed and refined further into adulthood and potentially prepare them for a position within the creative industry.
- Parents claim that **creating content has a positive impact on their child's confidence**. The sense of independence and self-worth when producing creative content and having the freedom to do so provides children with a sense of achievement. Parents also take great joy in what their child is capable of and talk about it with pride.

"If you don't move with the times and allow them to experiment they'll be left behind"

What else do we know?



25%

Of parents with children aged 4-16 say their child is involved in creating vlogs



22%

Of parents say their children livestream



For some children, livestream video is the new way to communicate with one another.

Rather than sending a private message, livestreaming enables children to update multiple friends all at once.

If a picture says a thousand words then a video says a million. Livestreams are instant, less time-consuming and require minimal effort to create and share. It allows children a stage to show-off, whether they are singing or sharing what they have created within Minecraft.

Although platforms such as YouTube Live and Instagram have the capability for children to livestream for long periods, this is uncommon. Few parents are aware of their child regularly livestreaming based on a planned schedule. Instead children are creating short bursts of content to share.

Smaller bite-sized content that is typically spontaneous and sporadically shared helps them stay connected. Parents describe this as being a 'social media for kids' where children are able to share what they are doing and feel part of a wider network in the online world.

One mum of a 13 year old girl explained that her daughter uses Facebook to livestream 3-4 minute footage of her singing:

"She asks viewers to submit comments in the chat section for song requests to help inform future streams"

She goes on to explain that over time she has developed a relationship with those watching her and receiving positive comments has boosted her self-confidence.

What else do we know?



25%

Of those who's children watch livestream content, claim they are watching content created by the child's friends



44%

Of those who's children create livestream content use YouTube



24%

Of those who's children create livestream content use Instagram

Risks, concerns and negative experiences

Parents admit feeling a sense of guilt in not being fully aware of what their children are doing online. Parents who are less familiar with vlogs and livestreams are especially nervous about this as it is relatively new territory for them, and not one that they want their children to engage in.

Parents of children who do not already vlog are very reluctant to allow them to start:



86%

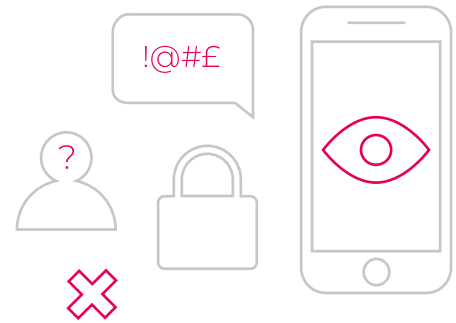
Of parents would not let their children have a public vlog



96%

This rises to 96% for livestreaming





Parents told us their concerns centre on the usual online safety trio of content, contact and conduct.

When it comes to their child watching vlogs and livestreams, this presents some parents with a dilemma as they are not always sure whether the messages being communicated to their child are appropriate for their age. Creating vlogs and livestream content is also a concern. This presents parents with its own set of unique problems mainly because:

- Livestreaming is instant; therefore there is no way of retracting content once shared
- Vlogs and livestream videos shared online are open to scrutiny; by a vast audience that extends beyond their friendship group

Some parents had experienced the negative consequences associated with their child watching and creating vlogs and livestreams. Parents divulged their personal experiences during this research and explained why this can be a cause for concern:

Sharing personal information with strangers:

Parents are worried their child will accidentally or deliberately share personal information online. This is especially a concern in livestreamed content as once it has been sent out there is no way of recalling it. Parents are also unsure whether it is still saved within the platform and therefore can be re-watched. Parents understand that vlogs can be removed if needed.

However, there is no way of knowing exactly who has seen them. If these vlogs contain personal details it is particularly worrying as it is hard to establish the level of damage control required.

“My son made a video and put it on YouTube. When I watched it I saw he was in his school uniform so I asked him to remove it. He didn’t think it was an issue but did what I asked”

Negative impact on attitude towards others and engaging in dangerous behaviour:

Younger children in particular are felt to be easily led by what they are watching. Parents recognise a change in their child’s behaviour which they claim correlates with what they have seen in vlogs and livestreams.

“I don’t like it really because I do feel the ones where they’re swearing are actually more aggressive and I actually see a difference in his behaviour, with regards to being a bit on edge when he watches things like that.”

Furthermore, younger children will not always recognise the dangers and are tempted to mimic what they have watched.

A delicate balance between wanting ‘likes’ and being able to cope with negative responses:

Constant connectivity has opened up new avenues through which bullying can take place. This is difficult for parents to moderate due to the number of devices and platforms being used by children. Parents feel that vlogs and livestreams are another way of children potentially being bullied.

Parents are concerned about their child being ‘trolled’ whilst perpetrators hide behind the screen. Therefore, parents want to know how to restrict who can see content produced by their child and also how to hide or remove any inappropriate comments. This is a difficult situation as children want their content to be shared publically in order to receive the glory of having the most views or ‘likes’.

“My son loves fashion but some people started writing nasty comments and trolling him. I told him to make his videos private – he’s upset because he can’t reach as many people as he would like to.”

Obsessed with creating perfect content:

Some parents feel their children can become somewhat obsessed in the quest for perfection, in particular when creating vlogs. This can lead to them obsessing over finite details to get it right. Therefore they might record, re-record and edit footage with great scrutiny until they deem this to be good enough. Parents recognise that this can be damaging as children attempt to create an online persona of themselves without any flaws which just doesn't exist in the real world.

“Sometimes livestream is actually better. They can’t obsess over it as once it is gone it’s gone!”

Unrealistic expectations and aspirations of a luxury lifestyle:

There is also a feeling amongst some parents that vloggers portray their lives in a way which is unrealistic and unobtainable. Often videos will consist of showcasing a number of brands and premium goods which are far too expensive for most young people to purchase.

This can lead to children feeling disheartened and disillusioned as they are making a direct comparison to their own lives. Parents worry that this can lead to their child feeling depressed or, worse, penniless as they put these vloggers on a pedestal.

“Although there is nothing wrong with watching a girl put on make-up some of them use really expensive make-up products. There’s no way young kids can afford it but it doesn’t stop them feeling bad about it.”

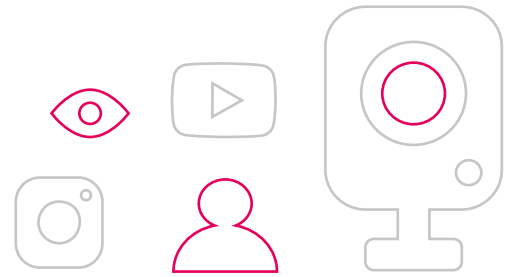
Severe consequences on mental health and body image:

Parents are not always aware of the potentially devastating consequences that can arise from watching this content with regards to how children might view their own bodies. One mum in particular admits to not recognising the effect this was having on her daughter over a prolonged period of time. Therefore she was shocked when she found herself in a serious life or death situation.

“My daughter actually overdosed not so long ago but thank God she failed. She told me ‘I don’t want to be alive because I don’t look good’. She thinks she should look like a size 6 curvy 25 year old and not the 15 year old girl she is.”

This example highlights the extreme negative impact when viewing content as this can escalate into a dangerous situation. Therefore there is an opportunity to better educate parents on the risks associated with livestreaming and vlogging so they can develop plans and strategies with their children to prevent the risks from turning into actual harm. This will allow children to:

- Continue watching and creating vlogs and livestreams in a way that minimises risks
- Reap the benefits associated with creating and watching content e.g. increase confidence, feel a sense of achievement and provide a creative output



Areas of parental concern:

Vlogging and livestreaming are relatively new online activities - which most parents have a level of concern over. These concerns are in addition to the typical worries of content - oversharing, contact - with strangers and conduct - cyberbullying. The levels of concern are significant across all areas.



62%

Are concerned about the dangers of **sharing personal information** online



55%

Concerned about the **bullying** that can take place in group conversations on social media



62%

Concerned about the impact of social media on **child's mental health** e.g. device addiction, poor body image



56%

Are concerned about their children accidentally **sharing personal information to strangers**



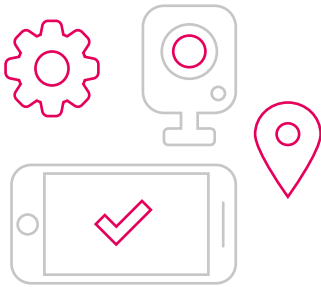
74%

Are worried about what people **might post** in the comments and the impact that could have



65%

Think that the lives portrayed in online vlogs give young people **unrealistic expectations** about life



Providing parents with support:

Our research demonstrates strongly that parents want more information to educate themselves in order to keep their children safe online. There are four key areas to address:

More information on the distinction between vlogs and livestreams as well as the capabilities within platforms:

Parents want more information as vlogging and livestreaming are often a completely new territory for them. They talk about the two interchangeably however they need clear explanations of what they mean and what children can and cannot do, for example whether you can livestream on Music.ly or just Live.ly? Or whether livestreamed videos are saved once broadcasted? This will help parents understand what they are agreeing to at the very beginning when children want to download an app or set up an account.

Simple instructions on applying parental controls and privacy settings on platform they are less familiar with:

Most parents within this research have a good understanding of how to use Facebook or YouTube as they are using these sites themselves. They are less confident about platforms where they have limited or no experience of using it such as Instagram, Twitch, Music.ly/Live.ly and Snapchat.

A clear destination for finding information:

Currently parents are relying on children to educate them and are not aware of a clear go-to place where they can find information. There is an opportunity to help educate parents and provide them with the relevant information all in one place as well as providing very specific problem-solving tools e.g. how to block an individual on a particular site, how to talk to children about staying safe and how to keep abreast of what they are watching/creating.

How to nip problems in the bud:

Despite the best intentions of parents, children may sometimes have a negative experience. Therefore parents want to know what to do if something does go wrong, for example if their child makes their YouTube account public and receives abusive comments. Parents want to know the process for dealing with this including how to report this to the platform provider and how to remove comments altogether to avoid the situation escalating further.

Resources

You can find our resources here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/parents-guide-to-live-streaming-and-vlogging/>

Live streaming & vlogging

BASIC TIPS

Before 'going live' or recording:

- Check privacy settings to see who the video will be shared with - ensure the only friends and followers option is selected
- Follow or friend your child's account so you'll be able to see their live streams and videos
- Read up on the app or platform to learn how to use the app safely
- Switch off GEO location on the app, device or platform so they don't reveal where they are
- Encourage them to think critically about what they say as the video will be online even after the live broadcast is finished
- Discuss what they'd like to share - create a storyboard together to help organise their ideas

While recording or live streaming:

- Ensure what they share complies with the platform's community rules and they know not to stream or share third party content like films or concerts
- If there are any people commenting or saying inappropriate things make sure they know how to block and report this as soon as it happens
- Encourage them to record in a public place and share a limited amount of personal content

Storing and sharing video

- Decide where and how the video will be shared after the live stream is over. Make them aware of how to delete it on the platform if they need to

Five Practical tips to keep kids safe

Where do they do it?

Most popular platforms - YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat

What are the benefits?

- Building confidence - as audience and engaging
- Connecting with like-minded people - Being able to be less self-conscious with people who have similar interests
- Financial reward - through sponsorships and likes on channel

What are the risks?

- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Negative comments
- Potential of Live Streaming

What do parents think?

Most parents of those already create livestreams permit their child to

Vlogging

Vlogging involves publishing pre-recorded videos on social networks like YouTube on a regular basis. Both brands and individuals or YouTubers / Vloggers do this.

cannot be edited, vlogs are pre-recorded and do not feature screenshotted commentary and pre-recorded

Between 8 - 9 years old with parental permission

It is a quick special moments

the comment immediate

to be more larger audience

of 'Vlogging' aren't simply most popular

552k

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