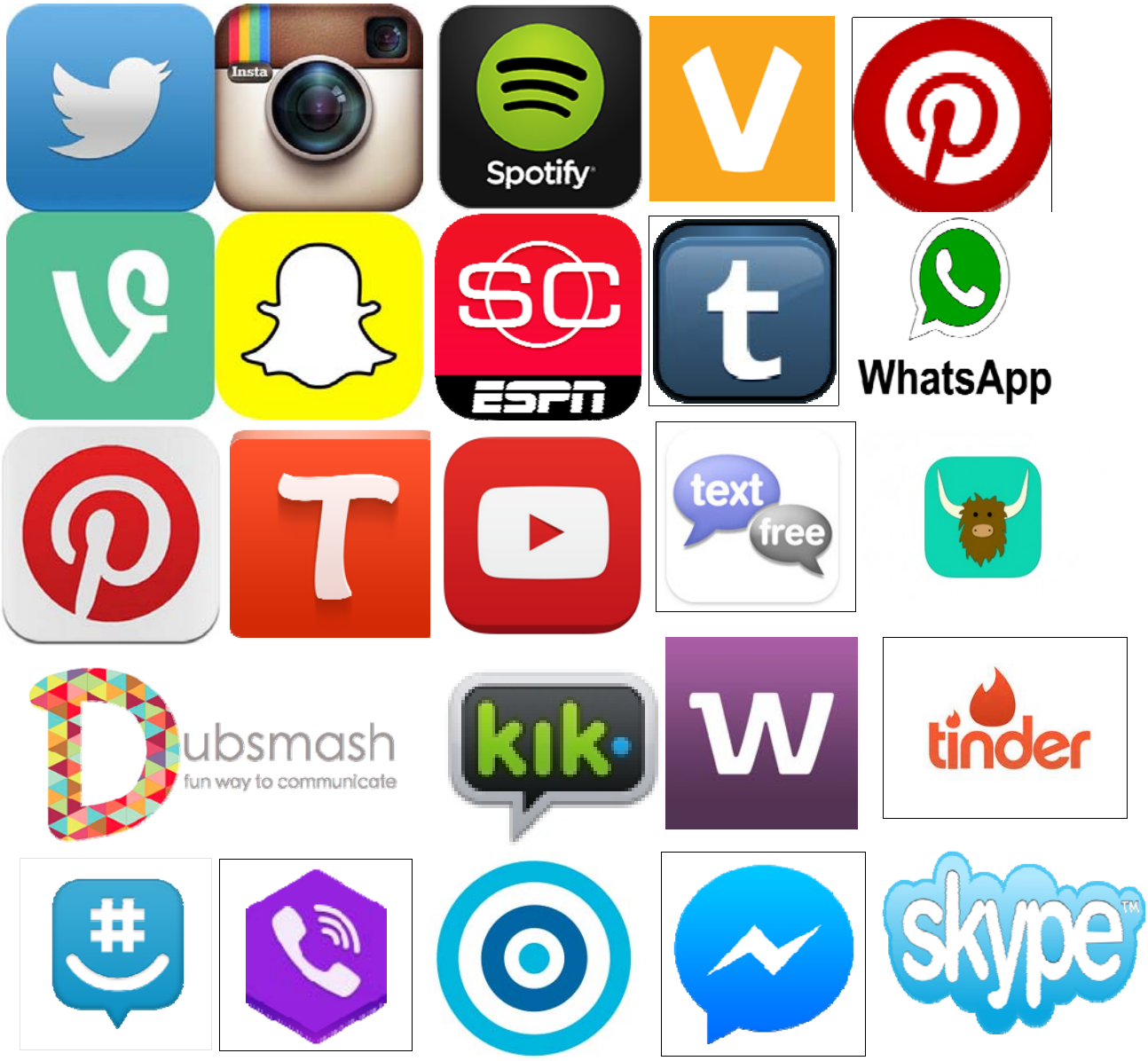
Apps You Want To Know:

A Parent's Guide to What You May OR May Not Want to Know About Your Child's Social Media Life...



Texting Apps

The World of Social Media

Kik Messenger

This app allows kids to text for free. It has no message limits, character limits or fees if you only use the basic features it has. Since it's an app, the texts won't show up on your kid's phone's messaging service, and you're not charged for them (beyond the standard data rate).

Parents:

-Ads/In-app purchases: *Kik* is used for conversations between brands and users. It also offers specially designed apps; many offer products for sale.

-Stranger Danger: *Oink Text* is an app linked with *Kik* which allows you to talk to strangers. You can share your *Kik* username to find other people to chat with. Also there is a *Kik* community blog where you can share photos of yourself and screenshots of messages exchanged. (*Kik* sometimes displays the user account's full name.)

Text Free

Text Free is an app your child can use if he/she has gone over the service bill and parents shut off the phone. They receive a free texting number, and send free unlimited texts to anyone.

Parents: Can be used to talk to people you forbid your child to talk to.

ooVoo

The app is a free video, voice, and messaging app. You can have a group chat of up to 12 people. It's common for kids to go on the app after school.

Parents: You can only talk to people who are on your contact list.

WhatsApp

Users can send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or more people with no limits or fees.

Parents: For users 16+. Once you sign up, it automatically looks up everyone that's in your contact list that has this app.

Tango

Tango is an app that you can use for free video, voice and text with friends and family. Accept or decline using your location setting to make phone calls.

Parents: Connect and share information including, group chats, games and music. Users must be 13+ in order to be able to use the app. Chatting can include up to 300 conversations.

Texting Apps Continued...

The World of Social Media

Group Me

Users can use this app to talk to more than one person at the same time. You can start a conversation with anyone who is in your contact list. This app works universally between androids and iPhones. You can also send photos within the group conversation.

Parents:

-Just like any other texting app, there is the risk it will be used for other forms than it should, such as sending explicit photos and messages.

Skype

Users can make an account and video-chat with anyone who is their friend. You can also call anyone of your friends via skype. It can be a landline or even a cell number. You can instant message and connect to family members all across the country at anywhere and anytime.

Parents:

-Users can use this as a possible way to sext their boyfriend or girlfriend through skype.

-Calling landlines and cell phones comes to a low cost.

Viber

Free calling, text and sharing pictures at anytime between Viber users. There is no registration or invitations, or alias needed. Automatically integrates your contact list so you may talk to anyone on your list who has Viber.

Parents:

-Persons not on their contact list and who don't have the app can't talk to them.

Parents: Just make sure your child knows everyone in his/her contact list and there aren't any random contacts.

Messenger

Users can chat with friends and family members who already have with on Facebook. It's similar to what used to be AIM for AOL account users. It's automatically linked through their Facebook profile. You can chat with anyone who is online at the same time you are. If not, they will get the message when they sign back on to their profile.

Parents: Just make sure your child knows his/her "friends."

Blogging Apps & Sites

Obsessive Nature

Instagram

Users are able to take, edit and share photos and 15-second videos. Profiles can either be public or private. Share and comment on others' photos. You can edit pictures by using different filters.

Parents:

-Users look for how many "likes" they can get in a certain period of time.

-Hashtags can be used as captions for what someone

Tumblr

It's an app that is between a blog and Twitter: a scrapbook of texts, photos, videos, and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumbleblogs," anyone can see it online.

Parents:

-User must create two profiles for full privacy. The first one is public; the second one is private and password protected.

Twitter

Twitter allows users to post brief 140 character message "tweets" and follow other users activities. Adults and teens use it to keep up with what's going on in the news and their favorite celebrities.

Parents: Users have the choice of allowing their tweets to be private or public.

-You can remove your tweets, but followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone.

Vine

Vine allows users to post and watch six-second videos that loop. Videos are often creative, and funny. Vine is used to post and share goofy videos of themselves, friends and/or family members.

Parents:

-Inappropriate stuff

-Privacy concerns: Videos you post, the accounts you follow, and comments you make are public unless you decide to allow only your followers to see what you post. Approve your followers.

Pinterest

Pinterest allows users to create their own collage boards that are based on what they like to do and what they are interested in. Boards can be personal things like your favorite teams in sports, your favorite hobby, or how you envision your future house, wedding, and vacations.

Parents:

-Can have inappropriate things on it if that is what they are into.

Secret Apps

What they don't want you to know

Snapchat

Snapchat allows users to send pictures and messages. With the pictures /videos, users can put in a time limit on how long another user may view the picture before they send it. Many users use this app to share goofy and embarrassing photos to lower the risk of them going public. Plus this is also used to tell stories about what is going on all over the world.

Parents:

-It is a myth that snapchat goes away forever. Anyone on the receiving end of the picture/video may take a screenshot and it will be there forever.

-Some users think because this is a "risk-free" messaging app, they can share pictures that can be claimed as "sexy."

Whisper

This is used as a "confessional" type of app. Users can post whatever is on their mind at anytime of day. This also allows the teens who have raging hormones the freedom to share how they feel without feeling any type of judgement from someone.

Parents:

-Very sexual for some—try to hook up with people nearby and there is a "meet up" section.

-Topics can include: depression, insecurities, substance abuse and any lies told to others.

Burn Note

This app deletes messages after a certain period of time that goes by. It limits itself to text messages compared to other apps. Teenagers who use this cannot send photos or videos.

Parents:

-Limits sexting.

-Avoid taking screen shots of each others' messages by only revealing a specific portion of the message

-You can send messages to any other teen who has the app and ones who don't.

Yik Yak

This app allows users to post brief comments like Twitter. Users can find out secrets, opinions, rumors, etc. Plus all the information posted on Yik Yak is within a 1.5 mile radius of that person.

Parents:

-Reveals location unless remove sharing.

-Can be a mix of trouble: cyberbullying, explicit sexual content, and things about drugs and alcohol.

Dating Apps

You May or May Not Want to Know

Tinder

Tinder is a photo, messaging, and dating app. Users browse numerous photos of potential matches within a certain area of the user's location., then message each other to meet up and hook up.

Parents: It's all about "swipes." You swipe right to "like" a photo or left to "pass." If a person whose photo you "liked" swipes "like" on your photo, the app allows you to directly message each other.

MeetMe

Users can chat and meet new people. This app does have a "match" feature where you can secretly admire others. With the user base, that means guaranteed attention, and fastpaced communication.

Parents:

-Open network: users can chat with whomever is online and also search locally for anyone in the area who is on.

-A lot of personal things are required: first and last name, age, and zip code or you can login using your Facebook account. Also, you can use

Omegle

Omegle is a chat site or app that puts strangers together in their choice of a video chat room or text chat. It is all anonymous and "interest boxes" allow you to filter your potential chat partners by shared interests.

Parents:

-There is no registration, and they're paired up with strangers.

-This is NOT an app for kids and teens, and many are looking for a sexual chat through video or porn sites.

-Explicit language!

Skout

It's a flirting app, but you can sign up as a teen or adult. You are placed in the appropriate age group, you can post to a feed, comment on other's posts, add pictures, and chat. Look at the geographical area when someone joins. If someone "cheeks" you, you can cash in your points to see who it is.

Parents: Safest dating app for teens if used appropriately, but easy for teens and adults to lie about their real age.

Fun Apps

Users can do voice overs on their favorite and most popular songs. You can also make videos of you singing the songs you love. You can do it with anyone and send it to your friends via text message. It doesn't stop with just songs; it can be sayings from different movies, things that are popular on Vine, tv shows, and so much more.

Parents: Some songs have explicit and derogatory language.

This is an app for users who support sports all year round . They can follow their favorite teams and get updates on their favorite players and what the statistics are during the season.

Parents: This is harmless app; it just allows you to keep up to date on everything going on around the league.

Users can answer questions on a certain topic to receive rewards, and once you receive every reward for each topic, you win the game. You can challenge anyone you know who has the app or it can link up to your Facebook and you can play anyone on your Friends list. It's actually a very educational app and the questions test you on topics on geography, entertainment, history, sports, art and science.

Parents: You can allow your child to play this game because it's educational and they are learning new things everyday.

YouTube is for users to be able to look up their favorite songs and watch the music videos to those songs, as well as any funny videos and upload videos of their own they want the world to see. You can follow your favorite people such as the Women's National Soccer Team or the Giants football team. You can start trends with making funny and stupid videos. You can also look at informational videos of how to do anything or even make up tutorials.

Parents: There can be some inappropriate things on there, but they're only seen by your child if he/she looks them up.

On Spotify, users can look up their favorite artists and follow them. They will be notified of any new singles and new stations the artists create. You can look at what they are listening to, and the app links to Facebook as well. You can see what your friends are listening to and if you have any of the same interests.

Parents: This is a music app for your children. It's a safe way to listen to the music they love and not download it illegally.

Start the Discussion:

When it comes to your children, they are looking for you to have an open conversation with them. You may think you are invading their privacy, but you are looking out for their best interest. Don't be scared; it will all be okay. You might end up surprising yourself on what your child tells you.

Questions to Start the Conversation:

-Do you have any social media accounts? If so, what are they?

-Do you know about being safe on the internet and watch what you post?

-Do you know everything you post stays on the internet no matter if you delete it or not?

-Is what you post appropriate?

-Does it represent you how you would want others to see you?

-Is your account private or public?

-Do you post private information such as your phone number, address, or social security number?

Parent Resources:

- www.netsmartz.org
- www.commonsensemedia.org
- www.safekidspro.com

Recommended Parent Monitoring Programs:

- http://www.mmguardian.com/
- http://www.phonesheriff.com/
- MyMobile Watchdog
- Mamabear
- Netnanny
- Webwatcher

West Virginia State Police
Crimes Against Children Unit
Internet Crimes Against Children

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