Five online areas parents should be aware of

Helping your children navigate the online world can sometimes seem daunting. Parents are constantly told about new services our children are using and it can sometimes feel impossible to keep up. But you don't have to know the name of every new app that comes out – it's understanding the risks of different online spaces that really helps. Knowing about these areas can help your child stay safe and build resilience online.

1. Livestreaming

Services such as Skype and Periscope allow users to broadcast live with no moderation.

Live streaming with strangers is inherently risky but your child might not think that their online friend is a stranger at all, so they could be persuaded to do things they wouldn't normally do, such as sharing sexual images. Warn them of the dangers of doing so, and also advise them no to give away anything that will identify their full name, where they live, like to hang out, or go to school when using these sites.

Teach them how to block and report any service they use. Make sure they have a **trusted adult to confide in** should something go wrong.

2. Anonymity

If a service allows users to be anonymous you need to be doubly sure your child knows how to **report and block** before they use it. They should also remember these key points:

- **Invisible doesn't mean invincible.** Just because users are anonymous doesn't mean they can't be traced;

- teach them to **ask themselves 'who am I really talking to?'** particularly before giving out personal information.

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3. No moderation

Many of the most popular services children use are un-moderated, such as WhatsApp and Snapchat, or live chat on popular gaming sites. Which means there's no one to intervene if things go wrong.

Think of it like leaving tour child in a playground without supervision. If you've taught them how to use the swings safely, they are likely to be fine. But if you haven't, or the swings are a bit old and rusty, you might decide either to hang around yourself to keep them safe or choose a different playground.

Un-moderated services need good and clearly defined community rules, and easy-to-find and use reporting tools to block people who break them.

4. Photo sharing

Teach your child to be aware that posting or sharing images means they lose control over who sees them.

Using privacy settings, or services that promise delete by default, such as Snapchat, don't solve this as other users can screenshot images and then alter or share them, even if your child doesn't want them to.

5. Peer-to-peer

This means any content shared by one user to another, from emailing, texting or WhatsApping a photo to a friend, to sharing access to illegally streamed films. User-generated content can't be classified – so parental controls and filters often don't work. It also may not have been fact-checked or professionally edited to make sure the messages contained within it are true.

Peer-to-peer content can be brilliant – it's given us reviews and the ability to access support – but it can also be used for more negative things, such as online extremism or spreading fake news.

Again, teach your child how to report and block content that upsets them – and to question anything they see or hear online.

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