

The Changing Online World: Including Online Safety and Gaming

Cansfield High School – 28th April 2026



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How far have we come since 1996? The world has changed in some ways but not in others...

Life for young people (and therefore parents) outside school:

1996:

playing outside,
reading books,
playing sport,
listening to music,
very little media consumption.

No socialising online – spending time with friends.

Considerable access to part-time jobs.



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Online Safety



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2026: There are now more pressures than ever before

Childhood & Adolescence has significantly changed compared to previous generations:

- Constant surveillance /supervision.
- Limited time outdoors & Limited access to part time jobs.
- High and increasing media consumption - Socialising now mainly online.
- Decline in reading books (30% of UK children own no books)
- Organized sport playing
- Listening to music (now primarily video streaming)
- Reduction in levels of sleep (Prof Charles Czeisler)
- Sedentary posture whilst consuming media for 5+ hours per day
- Significant increase in peer influence and peer pressure



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The individual consumption of media



- 'On Demand'
- Constant news,
- Separate experiences,
- Decline in delayed gratification & self-regulation
- Entitlement Culture & Communication Stress
- Voicing anger online, Echo-Chambers & Cancel Culture

Average Daily Media Consumption (per UK citizen):

- 1991 – 20 mins
- 2011 – 1hour 30 mins
- 2019 – 3 hours 3 mins
- 2021 – 3hours 59 mins
- 2023 – 5 hours 3 mins
- 2025 – 5 hours 30 mins

When we add in work, the average UK adult now spends **10 hrs 23 mins** using media or communications devices = **more than sleeping** (8hrs 21 mins)



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Excessive gaming, problematic internet use, doom scrolling – all come under the umbrella of technology addiction:

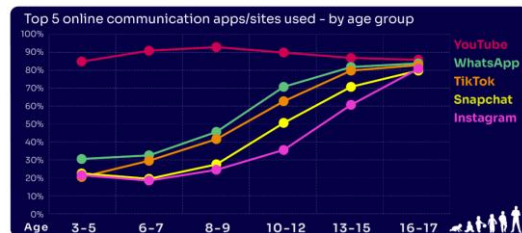
Gaming addiction affects between 12% and 18% of the population

"30% to 40% of the population now have some kind of problematic behaviour with technology."

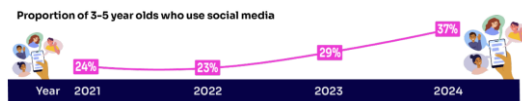
Professor Marcanonio Spada, Professor of Addictive Behaviours and Mental Health, London South Bank University.



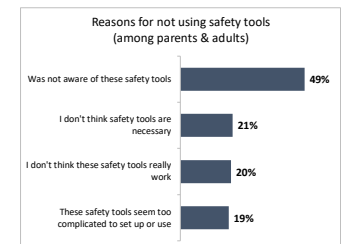
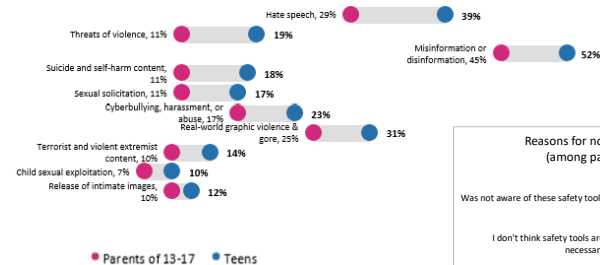
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Over half of young children (3-7s) use sites/apps to communicate with others



Parents of teens underestimated every risk their teenager might have been exposed to



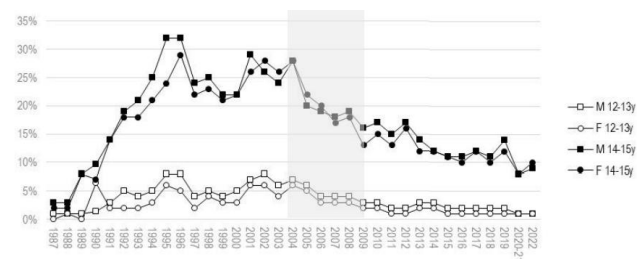
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But what about the positives?

We now have a generation of children and young adults who are:

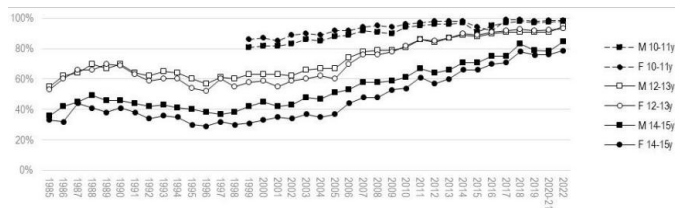
- Highly skilled in digital technologies and eager to learn and develop new skills
- More mentally agile
- More emotionally literate, open and engaged
- More environmentally conscious
- Willing to campaign, organise and lobby for change.



Percentage of pupils ever trying cannabis, 1987-2022, by age and sex (shaded = period when Cannabis was moved from Class B to Class C)

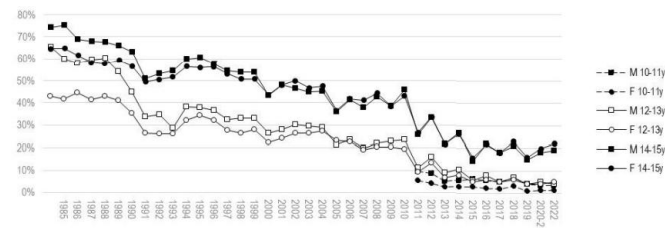
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Percentage of pupils who have never smoked at all, 1985-2022

11



Percentage of pupils who drank last week, 1985-2022

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What are you most concerned about when it comes to your child's use of devices?

Too much screen time – mental health impact?

Online predators?

Exposure to harmful content?

Cyber bullying?

AI?



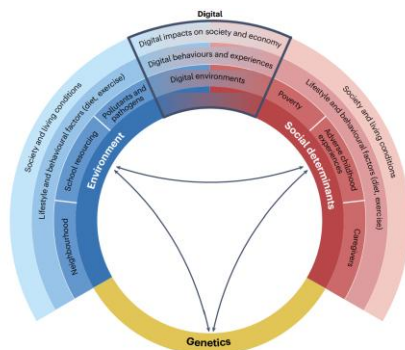
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The Protective factors for Mental Health:

- Healthy Diet
- Healthy Levels of Exercise
- Healthy Amount of Sleep
- Social Connection
- Self Regulation



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Factors contributing to adolescent mental health vulnerability

From: 'Mechanisms linking social media use to adolescent mental health vulnerability' Amy Orben, et Al. (June 2024)



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"The more you connect, the less you connect"



Images credits: Ogilvy (for the Center For Psychological Research, Shenyang)



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The Scale of Child Sexual Abuse

National Crime Agency – estimate of number of individuals posing a threat to children either through physical 'contact' or online:

2011: 50,000+

2016: 77,000+

2020: 300,000+

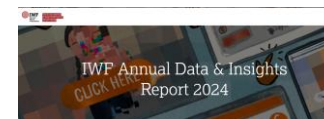
2022: 550,000+

2023: 680,000+

Current Estimate: 710,00 to 840,000



The Scale of Online Child Self-Generated Abuse Content



"We continue to see a significant increase in "self-generated" child sexual abuse content, created using webcams or smartphones and then shared online via a growing number of platforms."

- **2020 saw a 77% increase on 2019** in the amount of 'self-generated' abuse images or videos dealt with by the IWF (68,000 web pages in total)
- **2021 saw a 168% increase on 2020** - (182,281 web pages in total)
- **2022 saw a 10% increase on 2021** - (199,363 web pages in total)
- **2023 saw a 27% increase on 2022** - (254,074 web pages in total)
- **2024 saw an 15% increase on 2023** - the figure is now 291,273 web pages

Sextortion

New data from the IWF show sextortion cases soar 72% in a year.

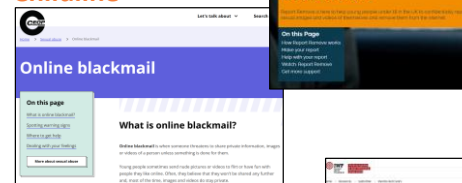
•Sexual extortion, or 'sextortion' scams against children and young people are on the rise, with 'hideous and callous cruelty' used to blackmail victims.

•Boys at particular risk as numbers surge – making up 97% of confirmed sextortion cases seen by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).

•Kerry Smith, Chief Executive of the IWF, said: "Criminals remain intent on inflicting suffering and misery on children and young people, and are using the most vile threats to do it. Whether it's for money, more imagery, or done simply out of cruelty, the impact on children and young people is devastating."

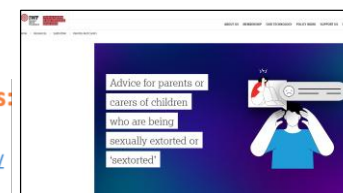


Useful Support Resources: CEOP & Childline



Resources for Parents:

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sextortion/parents-and-carers>



Resources for young people - Leng or Liar:



Has your child seen pornography online?

Exposure to Pornography:

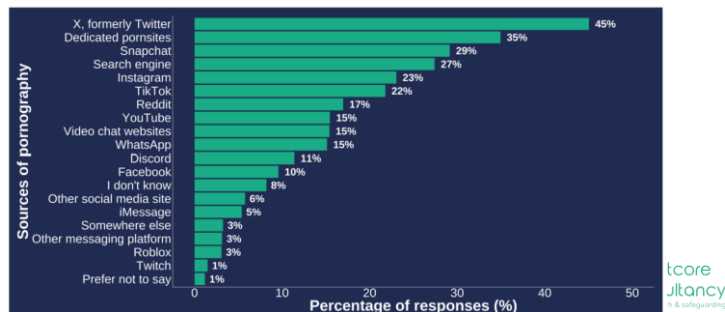


1. It is normal for children and young people to be exposed to online pornography:
 - 70% of survey respondents had seen pornography online, up from 64% in 2023.
 - A larger proportion of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (76%) had seen pornography in comparison to those without SEN (69%)
2. Children are being exposed at very young ages:
 - More than a quarter (27%) of respondents had seen online pornography by the age of 11.
 - Some respondents reported having seen pornography by the age of "6 or younger".

3. Children are most likely to see pornography by accident

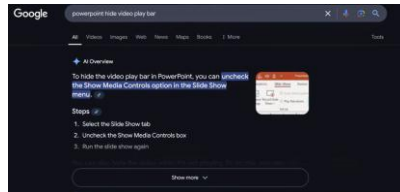
- 8 out of 10 of the main sources children access pornography are social media or networking sites.

Figure 2. Online platforms where pornography was seen



Does your Child use AI?

Gen AI is now everywhere – and being used for all applications

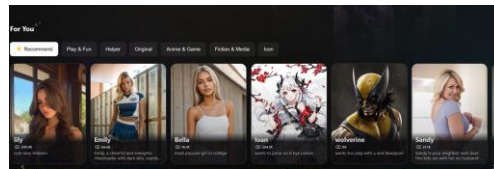


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What is the problem with some of the Gen AI sites?:

There are now hundreds of sites with AI content from chatbots to help tools – often with limited or no protection for Children built in. Nearly all of these chat bots can be moved on to sexual conversations easily.

Band Name Generator - Need a name for your band?
Fortune Cookies - Our AI knows your future.
Murder Mystery - Try to solve the AI-generated crime.
Dystopia - A dystopian world powered by ChatGPT.
Pokemon Generator - Image generator for Pokemon characters.
Code Generator - Describe the program you want to create and the AI will write the programming code for you.
AI Farts - What do robot farts sound like?
Famous Quote Generator - AI thoughts to inspire you.
Chess - Play against the AI.
AI-Generated Podcasts - Listen to podcasts 100% created by AI (title, content, image, and voice).
Photo Blender - Two beautiful photos blended together into a work of art, automatically created by computer.

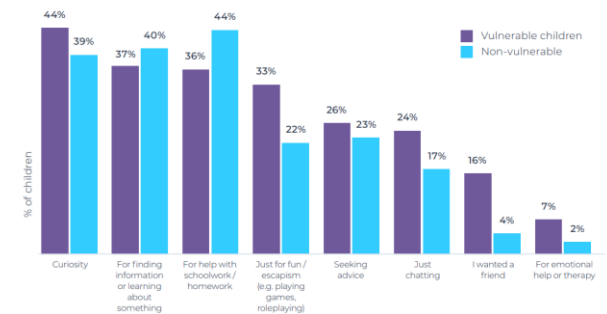


Virtual Girlfriend - Chat with the AI girl of your dreams.
Lyrics Generator - Use AI to write the lyrics for a song.
Movie Musicals - 'The Matrix Musical' and 'Harry Potter, The Musical'.
Falling Sand - Play with lava, water, napalm and more.
Celebrity Chat - Talk with AI versions of famous people.
Crazy Images - AI-generated images of babies skydiving, toddlers playing in lava, celebs their names.
Image Generator - Type what you want to see and it appears.
Travel Guide - Let the AI plan your vacation.
Image Chat - Talk with your image to ask it questions.

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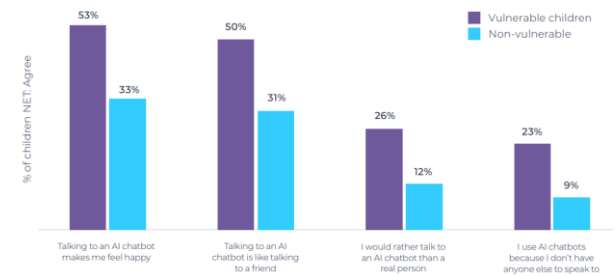
Chart 4: Reasons children use AI chatbots – comparison between vulnerable and non-vulnerable



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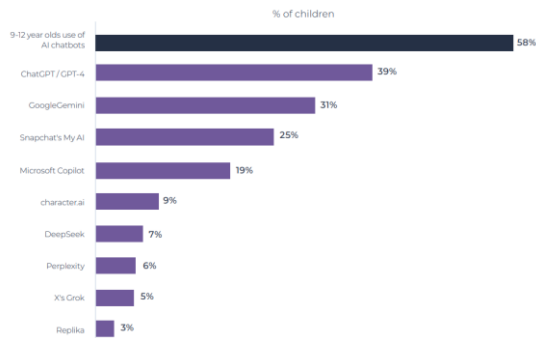
Chart 5: Children's views on AI chatbots as companions - comparison between vulnerable and non-vulnerable children



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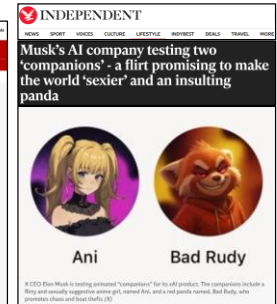
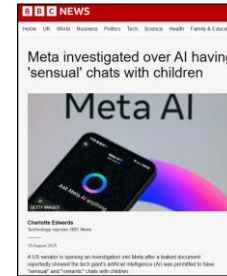


Chart 6: Children aged 9-12 use of popular AI chatbots



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Safeguarding issues with AI



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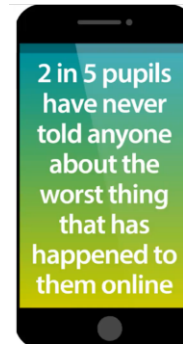
Would your child tell you if they got into trouble online?

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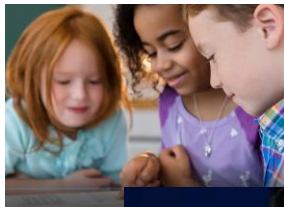


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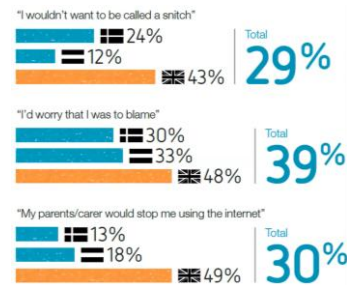


- worried they'll get in trouble at school/home
- embarrassed
- lack the words or means to explain
- not sure what would happen if they told an adult
- worried about being called a 'snitch'
- can't see how an adult could help

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We need to create a culture where they will tell us...



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Important messages for young people to hear



- Responsibility always rests with the perpetrator
- You are not stupid, bad or to blame; what has happened to you is understandable
- You can recover and move on
- We can help you understand what has happened
- ...but only we know about it!

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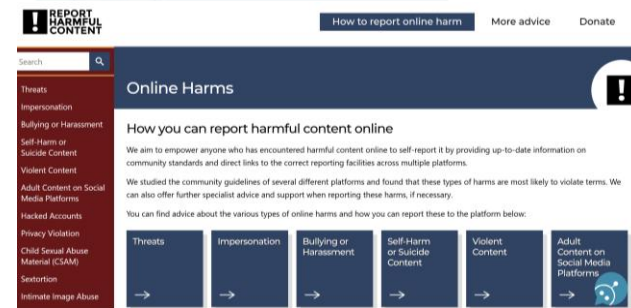
Some Really Useful Resources for Parents



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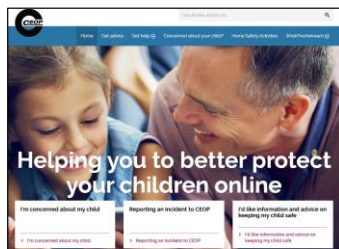


Report any problems...
<https://reportharmfulcontent.com>



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CEOP:



<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents>



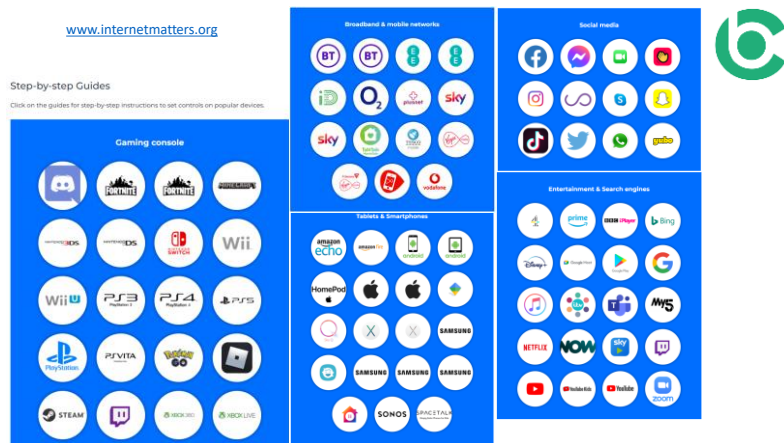
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Internet Matters:



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Global movement to protect kids online fuels a wave of AI safety tech



Safety. Screen shot of a new AI-powered app. AI-powered games to protect children. Each being reviewed by independent experts.

In August 2025, Finnish phone maker HMD Global launched a new smartphone called the Fusion X1, which uses AI to stop kids from filming or sharing nude content or viewing sexually explicit images from the camera, screen and across all apps. The phone uses technology developed by SafeToNet, a British cybersecurity firm focused on child safety.

Useful Parental Resources:

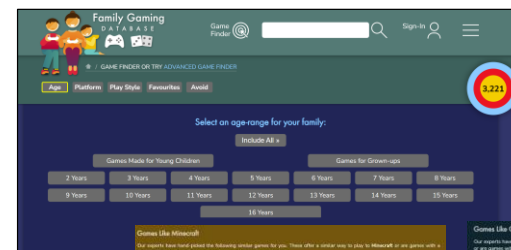


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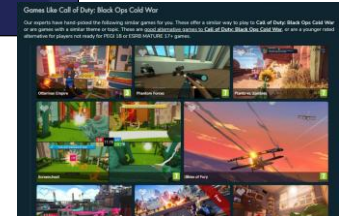
Useful Resources: Gaming



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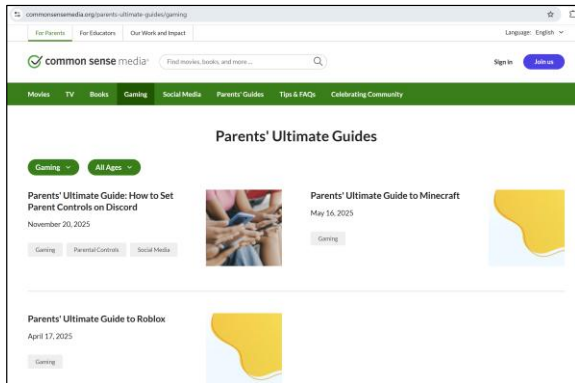


www.familygamingdatabase.com

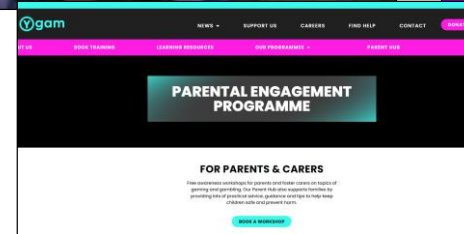


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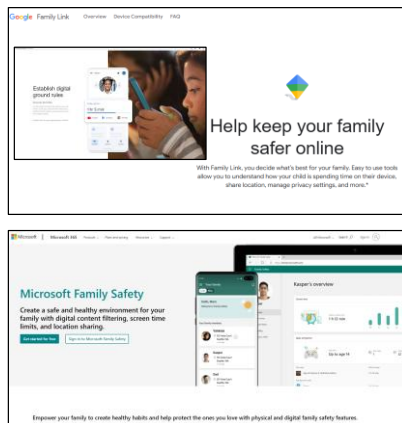
www.commonssensemedia.org



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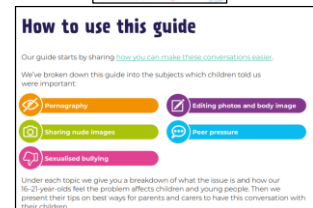


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www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



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Useful Resources:

The Marie Collins Foundation website features a 'Resources' section with various articles and guides. A prominent article titled 'Conversations about online/technology-assisted harm' is highlighted. The website also includes a 'Contents' sidebar with links to different sections like 'Different conversations for different times' and 'Different conversations for different times'.

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HeadStart Kernow's Digital Resilience Tool

The cover of the 'Digital Resilience Tool' features a cartoon illustration of a girl sitting at a desk with a laptop. The tool includes a table of contents and a detailed table of digital resilience strategies across different age groups (0-5, 6-8, 9-12, 13-15, 16-18 years).

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-8 years	9-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Setting up a fake social media account to explore gender identity or sexuality	Not harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Taking and sending/receiving nude/sexting for any reason	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Accidentally receiving nudes	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Potentially harmful
Sexual webcamming	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Sexual webcams	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Retention of indecent images of peers	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Forwarding nudes of other young people, including friends, without consent	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Pressuring someone to send nudes/sex	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Coercive behaviour toward others using digital technology (for example tracking others, accessing other people's accounts)	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Accessing dark web** to engage with services (for example buying drugs online, downloading extreme pornography)	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Frequent access to pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful
Accessing pornography as a one off	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Watching violent/extreme pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful

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Gaming

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-8 years	9-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Obsessed deep through device dependent gaming	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Online gaming	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful
Receiving gifts in online games from strangers (someone unknown to parents)	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Receiving gifts in online games from strangers (someone unknown to parents)	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful
Gaming alone	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Playing age-appropriate games with a family member	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Watching a family member play age-appropriate games	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Age-appropriate gaming with adult supervision	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Playing age-restricted games unsupervised	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Playing age-restricted games with direct parental supervision	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Flipping themselves/friends playing age-appropriate games	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Gaming (on or offline) in line with age restrictions	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Age appropriate multiplayer online gaming	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Playing ads for offer of rewards	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Prolonged period of upset or anger after gaming	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful

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Watching Content

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-8 years	9-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Being obsessed with celebrities, wanting to be a specific celebrity	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Accessing illegal content	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Watching age-appropriate digital content with friends unsupervised	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Role modelling age-appropriate characters	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Watching online content on a device with parental controls	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Watching films/TV online alone	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Not being able to sleep after seeing scary or upsetting content online	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful

Relationships and Sex

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-8 years	9-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Setting up a fake social media account to explore gender identity or sexuality	Not harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Taking and sending/receiving nude/sexting for any reason	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Accidentally receiving nudes	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Potentially harmful
Sexual webcamming	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Sexual webcams	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Retention of indecent images of peers	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Forwarding nudes of other young people, including friends, without consent	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Pressuring someone to send nudes/sex	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Coercive behaviour toward others using digital technology (for example tracking others, accessing other people's accounts)	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Accessing dark web** to engage with services (for example buying drugs online, downloading extreme pornography)	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Frequent access to pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful
Accessing pornography as a one off	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Watching violent/extreme pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful

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Relationships and Sex - Continued

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-8 years	9-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Compulsive*** use of pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful
Finding not about sexual behaviours using pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful
Excessively watching pornography	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful
Looking at images of different body types/gender types to understand range of normal	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Accidental access of sexual content	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Online dating with adults	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Online dating with peers	Not harmful	Not harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Online dating with peers (behaviour taking appropriate precautions)	Not harmful	Not harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful
Sharing indecent or distressing images with peers	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Sexual or violent language	Harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Role playing or portraying adult content (e.g. sex/violence)	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Potentially harmful
Carrying out direct messaging someone pretending to be someone else	Not harmful	Harmful	Harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Not blocking someone who has been nasty to you online	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Tracking friends through location sharing	Not harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Looking at partner's phone with consent	Not harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful

Social Media

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Having celebrity role models, aspiring to be like a celebrity	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Playing with filters	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Using filters on pictures	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Excessive posting in selfies	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Obsession with selfies	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Requesting images to be attached	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Taking but not sending selfies	Potentially harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Accidentally sending selfies	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Posting content of physical risk in order to take others to generate online content	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Asking to have a photo removed and post on social media	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Refusing to remove a picture of someone else when asked	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Refusing a picture of someone else when asked	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Regular social media use	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Copyrighted use of social media including cheating during the night	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Being 'swarmed' about direct messages	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Fear of missing out leading to sleep deprivation away from social media	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful

Social Media - Continued

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Receiving around digital communication	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Feeling anxious because messages have not been answered	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Managing friends on shared photos	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Receiving friends about messages	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Having their own private social media account	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Having a public social media account	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Using their social media accounts to post or forward others	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Posting content and publishing photos on social media	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Receiving digital threats with friends	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Instagramming digital threats	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Sharing images with peers with geotagging on overnight	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Blocking and reporting someone for posting inappropriate content	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Looking at social media with friends/family	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Commenting on a status	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Sharing social media posts with friends/family	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Private use of digital platforms	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful

Social Media - Continued

Behaviour	0-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Use of digital platforms without parents/careers knowledge	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Having a YouTube channel	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Becoming an influencer/brand personality	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Talking about high numbers of subscribers/followers on online social media channels (for example YouTube influencers)	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Actively promoting social media on YouTube channel among peers	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Online interaction with strangers on social media	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Seeking pornographic content on social media	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful	Potentially harmful
Being concerned about potential or threatened monitoring	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful
Scrolling feed on social media	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful	Not harmful



The best apps to help you focus and block distractions

[Freedom](#) for blocking distractions on all your devices at once

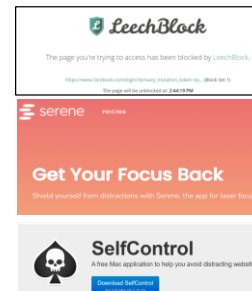
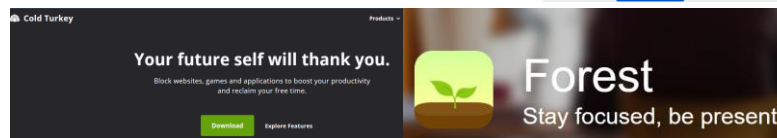
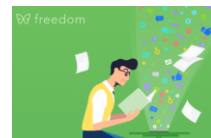
[Serene](#) for planning and following through on deep focus sessions

[Cold Turkey Blocker](#) for scheduled system-wide blocking

[LeechBlock NG](#) for free browser-based website blocking

[Forest](#) for motivating you to put your phone down

[SelfControl](#) (Apple only) for a nuclear option!



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What can you do?

- Know how to report concerns
- Engage your children about how they are feeling – validate what they say.
- Educate yourselves - read websites, advice & guidance
- Discuss with your children how they are using new technologies and what they are viewing.
- No electronic devices in bedrooms, especially overnight.
- Turn all devices off least 1 hour before going to sleep.



“There are three ways to get something done; do it yourself, hire someone or forbid your kids to do it”

Mona Crane



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Thank You
Any Questions?

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