Website Help

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4 APPS THAT SHOULD TERRIFY PARENTS... AND, TEACHERS

Let's face it. Teachers are parents, too. And, we all want to be "in the know" when it comes to technology. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but as educators, any type of technology that we don't know about is scary. We see it all. So, while we want teachers to be open-minded, we still want you to know the facts. This is my list of the top four apps to look out for, if your student/child has installed one to his/her phone, in 2018.

HOT OR NOT

When I taught computer applications and web design at Horn Lake High School, the internet browsers were just coming out. One day, I looked up and my students were having a grand old time looking at something. After further investigation, one of my students said, "Look, Miss Streeter! I uploaded your picture to HotorNot.com and you have 10 stars!" Not cool. HotorNot now has an app for teens. This app focuses on some serious objectification and can certainly be used for cyber-bullying. The app says that users between the ages of 13-17 can't share photos with one another, but there is no age verification process.

SNAPCHAT

Oh, these kids convincing their parents to let them use Snapchat because of the "filters" and the "news" it offers just make me chuckle. Until, that is, something happens and we have to investigate. Parents and educators should know that kids these days need to have a little maturity in place before launching out into Snapchat world. The #1 reason? Just because a photo or video disappears after 30 seconds from view does not mean it hasn't already been screen-shot a thousand times over by their friends or the images can't be brought back up off the server or "cloud" by law enforcement. And, unless you are that diligent parent that uses Snapchat yourself, it's a really hard app to use. Teens know this about you. ;)

REDDIT

Anytime a parent or educator sees a child with a Reddit App on his/her device, they should be wary. Once the app is installed, there really is no age verification process. Anyone with the official Reddit app can go to the popular Subreddit, "Reddit Gone Wild" and find a ton of images and even straight-up porn. And, Reddit rules don't prohibit nude selfies from appearing, as long as they are voluntarily posted by the selfie-taker. There is nothing to stop a minor from clicking the button saying they are 18 – except, maybe a parent.

YUBO (FORMERLY YELLOW

Yubo is labeled as a "Tinder for Kids" and is known for its reputation as a playground for pedophiles and sexual predators. This app boasts a new feature that encourages kids to create live video rooms with up to four friends and unlimited watchers. Even that WORD makes me cringe. According to "The Family Zone" website, the original app was launched just after Tinder announced it was prohibiting under-age users. How ironic. For users aged 13 to 17, Yellow's "friends" feature worked, and still works, in much the same way as Tinder does for adults. Users create a visual profile - no words, just images - and then share their location to browse images of other users in their area, swiping right for "yes" and left for "no."

Matches can then privately chat and access one another's Snapchat and Instagram profiles.

Users under age 17 require permission from a parent or guardian to set up an account. What they don't explain is that "parental confirmation" consists of a new user clicking a box. Age verification itself is a matter of self-report. If you say you're 13, or 16, or 17 - then you are.