

**We must recognize the potential danger, damage & devastation that living in a digital world can bring.**

✓ **Amount of screen time**

- **Children 0-8** Around 2 hours
- **Children 8-12** – 5 hours 33 minutes
- **Teenagers 13-18** – 8 hours & 39 minutes (not including schoolwork) [50% of US teens reporting 4 or more hours of screen time each day are more likely to experience insufficient sleep, less physical activity, more weight concerns & irregular sleep schedules]
- **Adults (18+)** – 7 hours a day (this includes work related screen time)

✓ **Exposure to explicit content**

**Overall Exposure Before Age 18**

**75% of teenagers (13–17)** report having seen online pornography.

Among those who had seen pornography:

- **44%** said they had intentionally viewed it.
- **58%** said they had encountered it accidentally. (Some reported both)

**Age of First Exposure**

- Average age of first exposure: 12 years old.
- 15% of teens reported first seeing online explicit content at age 10 or younger.
- A significant portion of them encounter pornography through social media platforms, not just dedicated pornography websites.

**Boys vs. Girls**

An OECD report summarizing U.S. research found:

- **93% of boys & 63% of girls (ages 13–17)** had been exposed to online pornography before age 18.

**Roughly 1 in 4 teenagers have sent a nude or sexually explicit image of themselves, while about 1 in 3 have received one.**

A **2025** review published in *Computers in Human Behavior*

- **24%** of adolescents reported **sending** a nude image
- **34.8%** reported **receiving** one.
- **14.5%** had forwarded someone else's image without consent.

## **Barna/Pure Desire Study 18-37 year olds**

55% report sending a nudge image of themselves or anyone else via text, email, social media, or app 53% of practicing Christians said they had 74% reported receiving a nude image via text, email, social media, or app

### ✓ **Dangers of online – grooming, exploitation, & trafficking**

We must understand the incredible dangers of exploitation & sex trafficking on Social Media, Messaging Apps, Online Gaming Platforms, livestreaming services & chat applications

- 300 million children around the world are impacted by sexual exploitation every year
- 21.3 million reports of suspected child exploitation were received in 2025 that included more than 61.8 million images, videos or other fields related to suspected child sexual exploitation.
- Reports of online enticement was over 1.4 million of 2025 (that's 2,800 per day!) that's a 156% increase from the same time period in 2024 (note these were just reports, not the one that were not reported - most experts believe it is scarily substantially higher)
- What does online enticement include
  - Grooming a child for sexual purposes
  - Requesting sexually explicit images or videos
  - Sextortion (blackmail using intimate images)
  - Coercing a child into sexual acts over video
  - Attempting to arrange an in-person meeting
  - Sending obscene sexual material to a child
- There were 1.5 million calls to the NCMEC in 2025 for Generative AI (GAI) & child sexual exploitation – this number has exploded & is rapidly evolving.
- 113,500 potential reports of child trafficking were received by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in 2025 (that's a 323% increase of last year)
- Sextortion – people blackmail children/teens for sexual pictures of themselves – the reports have skyrocketed with just over 10,000 in

2022 to now well over 50,000 in 2025 – averaging 137 reports per day

Online enticement occurs **across every platform** -social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, livestreaming services, & more.

### **1. Social Media Platforms**

These are among the most common places where offenders first make contact. *Instagram / Snapchat / TikTok / Facebook / X (formerly Twitter)*

*Threads / Bluesky*

*They often begin with:* Following a child / Complimenting photos / Responding to stories / Pretending to share interests / Moving the conversation to a private chat

### **2. Messaging Apps**

Many offenders attempt to move conversations away from public platforms into encrypted or private messaging.

Examples include: *Discord / WhatsApp / Telegram / Signal / Facebook Messenger / iMessage / Google Chat / Kik*

Private messaging allows offenders to groom children with less oversight.

### **3. Gaming Platforms**

NCMEC repeatedly warns parents not to overlook gaming.

Common platforms include: *Roblox / Minecraft / Fortnite / Call of Duty*

*Among Us / VRChat / Rec Room*

Gaming systems include: *Xbox / PlayStation / Nintendo Switch*

Many games include: Voice chat / direct messaging / Friend requests / Private servers / Livestreaming

Offenders frequently begin conversations during gameplay before encouraging children to continue talking elsewhere.

### **4. Livestreaming Platforms**

These include: *Twitch / YouTube Live / TikTok Live / Discord streaming*

Livestreaming allows offenders to: identify vulnerable youth / begin conversations / pressure victims into increasingly risky behavior.

### **5. Anonymous Chat Apps**

Examples include: ***OmeTV / Monkey / Chatroulette / Emerald Chat***  
These platforms pair strangers together, making them attractive to predators. Many children underestimate the risks because interactions seem spontaneous or anonymous.

NCMEC consistently emphasizes that **the danger is not the app itself—it is the ability for strangers to communicate privately with children**. Almost any platform with: direct messages / voice chat / friend requests / private groups / disappearing messages / livestream interaction can & are being used by offenders.

### **How Offenders Typically Operate**

1. Pretend to be another child or teenager.
2. Build trust through shared interests.
3. Give excessive compliments.
4. Move conversations to a more private platform.
5. Introduce sexual topics gradually.
6. Request explicit images or videos.
7. Use threats, shame, or blackmail (financial sextortion) to obtain additional images.
8. Attempt to arrange an in-person meeting in some cases.

### **Emerging Trend**

NCMEC says many offenders now **start on one platform and quickly move the child to another** that offers more privacy or encryption. This is one reason parents should focus not only on *which* apps their children use, but also on **who they are communicating with and how those conversations change over time**.

**The greatest risk isn't a particular app—it's any platform** that lets strangers build private relationships with children. That's why open conversations, active parental involvement, & teaching children to **recognize grooming behaviors** are more effective than simply banning 1 or 2 apps

### **✓ Mental health & social media exposure**

Pew Research Center, the U.S. Surgeon General, and the American Psychological Association.

### **Overall Use**

- **95%** of U.S. teens (ages 13–17) use at least one social media platform.
- **46%** of teens report being online "**almost constantly.**"
- Average teenager spends 3.5 hours a day on social media
- Nearly **40% of children ages 8–12** report using social media despite most platforms requiring users to be at least 13.

### **Teens' Views of Social Media (Pew Research Center, 2025)**

One of the most significant findings is that teens themselves have become much more skeptical about social media.

- **48%** say social media has a **mostly negative** effect on people their age. Up from **32% in 2022**.
- Only **11%** say it has a mostly positive effect.
- **45%** say they spend **too much time** on social media. Up 36% from 2022.
- **44% of parents** identify social media as the single biggest negative influence on teen mental health.

### **Reported Negative Effects** According to Pew (2025):

**19% (25% of girls 14% of boys)** say social media has hurt their own mental health

**50% of girls & 40% of boys** say social media hurts their sleep.

**20% of girls & 10% of boys** say social media hurts their confidence.

Children & teenagers who spend more than 3 hours a day on social media face a double risk of mental health problems including depression & anxiety.

### **Other Negative affects**

#### **Productivity**

Many teens report social media reduces their ability to focus on schoolwork and daily responsibilities, with productivity being one of the more commonly reported negative effects.

#### **Fear of missing out (FOMO)**

“FOMO” – seeing peers engage in exciting and interesting events – can negatively impact mental health. Kids may be more likely to try risky behaviors or “social media challenges” to fit in.

#### **Overemphasis of looks (comparison) body dissatisfaction**

Social media is increasingly visual. Girls can be especially impacted by the effort involved in maintaining their online presentation, and the peer feedback they receive. Social media encourages kids to think about themselves as a brand. This puts kids at risk for worse body image.

### **Replacement for real life interaction**

Spending too much time on social media can prevent kids from learning skills to interact with others in real life – skills like understanding context, starting and maintaining conversations, and interpreting body language.

### **Permanent and public**

Social media posts and interactions never really go away. This means the mistakes kids make as they grow and learn on social media don't go away either. It can impact peer relationships, mental health, and even prospects, such as employment, in adulthood. Sexting is a risk here too.

### **Brain development**

Social media is designed to be...social. No matter the platform, social media is designed to hijack our brain's reward center, there are rewards for engaging, whether it's posting, commenting or reacting. Brains that are still developing are at risk for permanent changes to how rewards are perceived and sought.

### **Exposure to negative content**

Unbalanced exposure to negative news and hate speech can negatively impact the mental health of adults and kids.

### **Cyberbullying**

Social media can provide space and easy access for kids to be harmed by peers – and to cause harm.