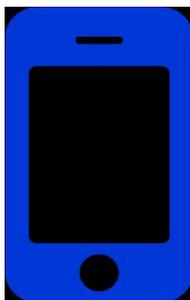

Dr. Rugo Focht's Guide to Social Media

Things to Remember

1.) Everything you post or “share” has consequences. Even if you delete a post, someone has seen it and will most likely remember it. The worse case scenario would be if someone takes a “screen-shot” and passes it along. It happens all of the time. Anything you post on the internet will most likely stay on the internet permanently.

2.) Never post or share any personal information (e.g. where you live, what school you go to, birthdate, social security number, phone numbers, email etc.)



3.) Beware of sexual predators or “Cat-fishing” - people who pose to be people that they are not, cyberbullying, explicit sexual content, unintended location sharing and explicit information about drugs and alcohol.

The Most Popular Applications



Twitter

Mostly used via phone as an app (can also access via the computer as well). Twitter is a social media outlet that allows users to instantaneously share thoughts, ideas, pictures, website links etc. to a news feed/timeline in 140 characters or less. Twitter is a popular social media avenue to get instant news (on the go) and take part in “trending” world wide conversations. While you can make your “tweets” private and only

media outlet that is very lenient in terms of uncensored, elicited content. Twitter users are able to access porographic or other inappropriate twitter accounts.



Facebook

Facebook has gotten much better in terms of privacy. Users are able to customize user preferences in who can or cannot see their status updates, photos or videos. Facebook users have the ability to block and report other users in addition to accepting or declining friend requests.



Instagram

Mostly used via phone as an app (can also access via computer). Users take photos or upload photos via app and post on a news feed/timeline. Instagram users are able to block and report other users as well as make their accounts private.



SnapChat

Used via phone as an app. Users take pictures immediately via phone camera and can instantly share with a list of selected approved friends. Pictures can be shared to selected groups of people to be viewed an unlimited number of times within a 24 hour period (called “My Story”) or to selected individuals. Users can set a timer for the length of time the picture is available for viewing - anywhere between 5 seconds to 60 seconds. The appeal of SnapChat is the “disappearing” of “private” photos. Users feel confident that any pictures sent to an individual will remain private. However, it is possible to “screen-shot” these pictures and pass them around. Though recent updates to this app enable users to be notified if their photos have been “screen-shotted,” screen shooting is still possible no matter what.

allow certain users to see your tweets, Twitter is one social



Tinder, HotorNot, OKCupid, Badoo

(and others)
Online dating apps are now becoming more and more popular among young adults. The premise of these apps is to get connected to other young people in the area, rate them based on attractiveness, getting matched/connected and messaging each other. These apps are appealing due to their “game-like” design and it’s fast, easy way to meet new people.



Tumblr.

Is a cross between a blog and a Twitter: streaming a scrapbook of text, photos, and/or videos and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or “tumblelogs,” that can be seen by anyone online, if made public. Many teens have tumblrs for personal use - sharing photos, videos, musings and things they find funny with their friends. Parents need to know that pornographic images and videos are easy to find, as well as depictions of violence,

self-harm, drug use and offensive language. Privacy can be guarded but only through an awkward workaround - the first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the internet. Those who desire full privacy must create a second profile which they are able to password protect.



Vine

A social media app that lets users post and watch looping six-second video clips. This Twitter-owned service has developed a unique community of people who post videos that are often creative and funny -- and sometimes thought provoking. Teens usually use Vine to create and share silly videos of themselves and/or their friends and family. Parents need to know that it’s full of inappropriate videos - e.g. nudity, marijuana use, etc. There is also significant privacy concerns: posting, accounts you follow and the comments you make on videos are all public by default. You *can* adjust your settings to protect posts and approve selected followers.



Kik Messenger

An app-based alternative to standard texting that kids use for social networking. It's free to use but has lots of ads. It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if using just the basic features. Parents need to know that there is some stranger danger - An app named OinkText, linked to Kik, allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. There is also a Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screen shots of messages (sometimes displaying users' full names) to contests. Similar apps include Oovoo and WhatsApp.



Yik Yak

A free, location-aware, social-networking app that lets users post "anything and everything" anonymously through brief, Twitter-like comments, which are distributed to the geographically nearest 500 people who are also signed into the app. Why it's popular: Kids can find out opinions, secrets, rumors and more. Plus they get the

bonus thrill of knowing all these have come from a 1.5 miles radius. This app has it all: cyberbullying, explicit sexual content, unintended location sharing, and exposure to explicit information about drugs and alcohol. Its gossipy and sometimes cruel nature can be toxic to a high school environment, so administrators are cracking down.



Ask.fm

A social site that lets kids ask questions and answer those posted by other users - sometimes anonymously. While there are some friendly interactions on Ask.fm (e.g. favorite foods or crushes) there are lots of mean comments and some creepy sexual posts. The iffy content is part of the site's appeal for teens. What parents need to know: Bullying is a major concern. The British news website MailOnline reported that the site has been linked to the suicides of several teens. Talk to your teen/s about cyberbullying and how anonymity can encourage mean behavior. Users can decide whether to allow anonymous posts and can remove their answers from

streaming to decrease their profile's visibility.



Omegle

A chat site (and app) whose motto is, "Talk to strangers!" This app puts two strangers together (no registration required - no user accounts, no usernames) in their choice of a text chat or video chat room. Being anonymous can be very attractive to teens, and Omegle provides a no-fuss opportunity to make connections. Its "interest boxes" also let users filter potential chat partners by shared interests. This is NOT an app for kids and teens - Omegle is filled with people searching for sexual chat. Some prefer to do so live. Others offer links to porn sites. Recently, there have been instances of suspects trading child pornography on Omegle.



Whisper

A social "confessional" app that allows users to post whatever's on their minds, paired with an image. Why it's popular: With all the emotions running through teens, anonymous outlets give them freedom to share their feelings without fear of

judgement. Parents need to know that ‘whispers’ are often sexual in nature and content can be dark. Topics include insecurity, depression, substance abuse, and various lies told to employers and teachers. Also, while it is anonymous to start, it may not stay that way. The app encourages users to exchange personal information in the “Meet Up” section.

While this is all overwhelming, it is important to know that there is a constant influx of new and exciting apps being developed every few months! Most of these apps are free to download with no age restrictions. We encourage you to be aware of the various apps and social media outlets that your young teen can be involved with. It is important to stress the importance of information safety, cyberbullying and responsible sharing.
