

Social Media - is there a Realistic Danger?

Social networking websites and applications allow users to restrict who can see their page and contact them; however most users opt to make their profiles public or fail to fully understand privacy settings to ensure safety.

The primary concern is that this openness puts users at risk, making them particularly vulnerable to predators. Currently, we are seeing a subculture of teens and adults who have developed different notions of privacy. Youth feel relatively comfortable sharing aspects of their lives on-line and in certain cases in person with those who connect through the site; teens do not fully understand the risks of making certain information public.

By giving youth access to an on-line audience of their peers, social networking websites provide a fertile ground for identity development and cultural exposure. Youth view social media as a place where they can be who they are, joke around with friends and make certain to stay in the loop about everything that is going on around them. The consequences to this behaviour when un-monitored or addressed by parents can be detrimental to professional and academic futures.

See more at: www.mediatedreality.com

Some hands-on parenting is not always a bad thing:

Building password trust from start to finish

According to Jesse Miller of www.mediatedreality.com here are is a great lesson for parents to build trust and accountability with their kids as it applies to email, social media and on-line gaming.

Learn more about Social Media Awareness & Safety for Parents and Youth by visiting www.mediatedreality.com or by following on Twitter @mediatedreality

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Have an open dialogue about appropriate use of Social Media / Internet Access as a family (family beliefs, acceptable sites, etc.)
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Parents, have the child write his/her emails and usernames down on a piece of paper.
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Allow the child to create 6-10 letter password with vowels changed to numbers and without parents seeing, have the child write their password at the bottom of the paper.
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Place the paper in an envelope and seal it. Both the parents and the child should sign the back of the envelope; parents, place it on the fridge-in plain view. Parents should respect their child or teen's privacy, but the onus is now on the child to maintain the password as is. Parents now have access when needed without having to breach privacy (A comparable thought would be a snooping mom & daughter's diary).
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Now, once a month (or set a schedule as needed) parents can have a random password check with their child present. If the pre-chosen password works when the parent types it in, then he/she won't have to look further into content. If the password fails, there's a trust issue apparent. At this point, a new password is created to get the child into the habit of protecting content access from peers, foes and hackers (kids are easy targets for hacking from their peer group).
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The key to this lesson is that parents will demonstrate trust as well. If the child sees that the envelope has been opened, dialogue has to take place on both sides. If the child knows the envelope has been opened, parents have an opportunity to converse about the Social Media or Internet concerns and why they went into accounts.