

# Internet Safety 101: Spotlight on Online Video Networks



## What are Online Video Networks?

Online video networking sites like YouTube and Ustream allow anyone to upload and share videos they produce, copy or find. People who view the videos can also generally share the videos with friends, link to other videos, rate videos and post comments about the videos. Parents should be aware that many video networks contain an abundance of pornography, violent content and drug and alcohol abuse. These sites do not use any form of identity verification, so content meant for mature audiences is easy to access (a user just needs to lie about their age).

These video sites are similar in form and function to social networking sites, and users can create online profiles with extensive personal information, and users can also send and receive private messages to one another.

Most computers and mobile devices today come with built-in webcam devices, and uploading videos is simple on these sites. EIE strongly recommends that webcam devices are only used under close parental supervision. With many teens today following cues from misbehaving celebrities, video networking sites can facilitate situations where teens seek attention in the wrong way. As with every area of on- and offline life, conversation and guidance from parents, educators and other caring adults is key to protect children online. Look for teachable moments; keep an ongoing dialogue and build an atmosphere of trust around Internet use.

**The age for using most social networking sites is 13 or 14, depending on the site. Children that do not meet the age requirement on the site should not have an account on the site.**

**Parents should be aware that most social networking sites now also have video sharing features, so your child can upload and share videos through Facebook, Myspace in addition to video sharing networks!**

## Quick tips for your kids:

**Be careful about what you post.** Be aware that your profiles and videos on video and social networking sites are on public spaces (even if your profile is set to private, you are still at risk). Don't post anything that you wouldn't want the whole world to know, and avoid posting anything that could make it easy for a stranger or cyberbully to find you.

**Harassment, inappropriate content, hate speech and the like should never be posted** on video and social networking sites and should be reported if ever encountered. Teach your kids to do unto others as they would have others do unto them.

**People aren't always who they say they are.** Only add people to your friends list and your video network that you know in the real life. Parents should approve all friends added. If anyone you don't know contacts you through a video networking site, talk to your parents and show them the message. Also consider blocking unknown solicitors.

**Be honest about your age.**

**Be aware of phishing scams and other ploys to get your personal information:** Never supply personal information to anyone through social networking sites. If anyone requests personal information, talk to a parent or trusted adult immediately and contact the site's administrators.

**Only post videos that your parents approve.**