

8 Scary Social Networking Sites Every Parent Should Know

If you think you're hip to your children's online social habits because you know all about Facebook and Twitter, you've got it all wrong. Tweens and teens are [increasingly leaving](#) these sites in favor of new apps that offer richer features and a safe haven from watchful parents.

For some parents, this might be more of a trick than a treat because of the greater potential for cyberbullying, online harassment and other inappropriate activity, which can fly under the radar if you're not actively monitoring these newer sites. In fact, one of the reasons why teens are moving away from Facebook specifically toward other smaller, more niche sites, is precisely because "my mom doesn't have that" -- according to a recent [Pew study](#). This may be easy to understand, since the study found that 70% of teens have been friended on Facebook by their parents. According to a [recent study](#) by Piper Jaffray, "the popularity of Facebook is waning among teens with 23% citing it as the most important, down from 33% six months ago and 42% a year ago."

As more parents embrace Facebook, they're driving teens and tweens away as they look for other, more secretive venues that won't be subjected to the same level of parental scrutiny. For parents, this creates a tricky situation: How can you keep track of your kids' online activity when you don't even know what sites they're using and it's hard to keep up with all the startup apps that roll out?

Here are eight scary social networking sites your teen or tween may be using:

1. **Creepy** - Did you know that with just a Twitter or Facebook ID, you can track someone's every move and find their exact current location? Creepy does just that -- it allows anyone with access to another person's online photos to pull sensitive geotag location data, allowing them to pinpoint where the photo was taken. Just provide Creepy with the needed username and it will retrieve all the locations the user has posted photos from.
2. **Ask.fm** - This Latvia-based social networking website allows users to ask other users questions, with the option of anonymity. It's this anonymity and unmoderated Q&A forum that has been criticized by many parents and anti-bullying organizations. As an example, questions like "Why are you a loser?" "Why are you ugly?" etc. are common on the site. Ask.fm is not well-known by many adults, but it has been associated with instances of cyberbullying in teens and a series of [bullying-related](#) suicides.
3. **Vine** - While this mobile app can be used to post short videos, some teens are using the app to videotape others without their knowledge or using the app to mock or harass other kids.
4. **Snapchat** - Widely known as the "sexting app," Snapchat allows users to take photos, record videos, add text and drawings and send them to a controlled list of followers. The followers can only view the photos for a short period of time, after which SnapChat supposedly destroys them. However, many users get around this 'self-destructing' feature by taking screen shots of the photos. This app has been associated with numerous [sexting cases](#) among teens that led to harassment.
5. **KiK** - An instant messenger service designed for use on smartphones. This is another app that has been widely associated with sexting.
6. **Pheed** - Some have called this the next big social app for teens, with 81% of its user base between 14-25 years old. One of the site's more popular features is the ability for teens to livestream what they're doing at any given moment. It's yet another social media platform that allows for the sharing of all sorts of content, including text, photos, videos and audio.
7. **Qooh.me** - This is another social media site that allows teens to ask other users anonymous questions. This type of open access site can pose problems for teens/tweens, as users do not have to login to ask questions, there is no online moderator to check for disturbing content and adult profiles are mixed in with those of teens and children.
8. **Oovoo** - A startup video chat and instant messaging application that is similar to Skype and Apple's Facetime. While this site blocks those under 13 from registering, youngsters need only lie about their age to set up an account.

It is important for parents to talk openly with their kids about these apps and the risks they carry. Another option is to restrict your child's access to these apps -- both the iPhone and Android devices have parental settings that you can use to block certain types of activity. For parents who want to track their kids, there are activity monitors like Net Nanny and SnoopStick.