

# Live streaming: What parents need to know



**With the increasing popularity of live streaming platforms, what are the risks and opportunities that children face when using this latest development in social media? Leah Buck, Education Coordinator for CEOP, tells parents what to be aware of and how to talk to their child about live streaming**

## **What is live streaming?**

Live streaming is the broadcasting of real-time, live video to an audience over the internet. All you need to be able to live stream is an internet enabled device, like a smart phone or tablet, and a platform to broadcast on.

## **Why are live streaming platforms so popular?**

Live streaming is highly appealing to young people as it presents the chance for them to be a creator, a presenter and to be seen by a potentially huge audience. You can broadcast anything you are doing across the world without delay or edit.

With the popularity of live streaming platforms, such as [YouNow](#) and [Live.ly](#), continuing to rise, other more conventional social media platforms have branched out into the world of live streaming with Facebook introducing Facebook Live and Twitter launching Periscope, to name a few.

## **What are the opportunities and risks of live streaming?**

The inspiration to live stream takes its lead from reality TV and YouTube, however it is uncensored, unedited and unrehearsed. Used in positive ways it can be a campaigning tool, create identity, showcase talent and develop skills in communication.

When thinking of the motivations for live streaming it can help to think about young people's developmental stages. Self-preservation is really important for teenagers, and sharing something and having people show an interest in the present moment you are broadcasting can feel like the ultimate confidence and ego boost. This immediacy combined with the pleasure of affirmation through 'likes' and positive comments speaks directly to the adolescent brain.

### **'Live streaming can be both unpredictable and hard to moderate'**

Despite the clear opportunities and gratification that live streaming presents, it is important to remember that live streaming can be both unpredictable and hard to moderate, which is understandably worrying for parents and carers.

There have been stories in the news about live streaming being used to broadcast abusive or harmful behaviour, young people being involved in accidents whilst live streaming and children viewing inappropriate live streamed content that they weren't expecting to see.

As with any form of social media, there are risks. These include receiving negative comments, exposing more personal information than intended and contact from strangers. There is also the risk of possible exposure to sexualised content, both visually and through chat, and the loss of control of a streamed video once online as there is nothing to stop it being recorded, shared and used to threaten or blackmail.

It is therefore important to have ongoing conversations with your child about their internet habits and how they communicate online. This can include using news stories as opportunities to ask your child about live streaming, their views on it and if it's something that they currently do or have thought of taking part in.

This can then open up a dialogue on how they keep themselves safe online, if they know how to report directly to social media platforms and what else they can do to help them to have positive online experiences.

CEOP's education programme Thinkuknow has information and advice for parents and carers to help you to keep your child safer online. If you are worried about someone your child is in contact with online you can find information and advice and report these concerns directly to CEOP by visiting the CEOP Safety Centre.

### **UPDATE: Live.me (October 2017)**

## **At Parent Info, we've recently had some parents approach us with concerns over the new streaming app Live.me.**

Here are the main points you need to be aware of:

- Users must be 13 years and over to use the app. It advises those younger to get their parent's permission before downloading the app.
- The app is currently only available on iPhone.
- Allows people to live stream and broadcast what they are doing at any given time. As it's live, the content is not moderated so adults will be able to talk directly to your child.
- If users wish to report abuse or hurtful messages then they will need to email Live.me directly and provide screenshots of the abuse for evidence. However the app does not tell you how long it will take to address your issue.
- Videos can share your location and lets users search for other broadcasters in the same area. You can turn your location off through the settings section, but this needs to be done before broadcasting live.
- You can earn money through live chatting on the app. Viewers can give broadcasters virtual 'diamonds', which can be exchanged for money when they reach a certain limit.
- Videos can be uploaded to the official Live.me website for greater exposure.