

## + Including Chatbudi top tips

Week by week, the Chatbudi eBook will give you our top tips to help manage your child's digital safety online

See page 4



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Chatbudi is a digital technology startup dedicated to helping parents protect their kids online - anytime, anywhere.

[www.chatbudi.com](http://www.chatbudi.com)

## Introduction to this guide

Children's digital footprints are being created before they even learn to walk. As parents we have the responsibility to teach our children how best to protect themselves online. To truly master this we first must understand our children's behaviours and attitudes online. Technology advances so quickly that online safety trends are constantly changing. At Chatbudi, we work with parents, children and teachers to stay at the forefront of these changes. The aim of this book is to help you decipher and understand your child's online world. We will regularly update our material to help you keep up with the latest trends.



“Your child’s digital footprint often starts before they can walk and follows them around for life”

## As parents today, it is likely that you made your first mark on the internet roughly a decade ago.

When your name is typed into an online search bar, there is a good chance that a social media profile will pop up; your latest tweets and perhaps your Facebook profile picture. Imagine a world where your digital footprint started as a child, and imagine how different this search would look today. Your children’s digital footprint starts before they begin to walk and follows them around for life. As a parent, you are responsible for what has

“As a parent, you are responsible for what has become known as your child’s digital shadow”

become known as your child’s “digital shadow”. Today’s technology means children have a social media presence before they are old enough in the eyes of the law to have a say on whether or not they want one.

We have had countless cups of tea with parents to learn about how Chatbudi can help them to protect their children’s digital footprint. Following on from listening to their concerns, the Chatbudi team has visited schools across Dublin, meeting pupils to find out more about current online trends. We have taken all of our research and put it together to bring to you this ‘Chatbudi Digital Parenting’ guide, giving you

full insights into your child’s online world and advice on how to protect them in cyberspace.

One important trend we at Chatbudi have observed is that when children go online they are increasingly *going mobile*. The danger with this trend is that children can be accessed by strangers or bullies anytime, anywhere. There is an emerging trend that young children own or have access to Wi-Fi enabled devices, i.e. iPods, iPads and Xbox consoles. Wi-Fi enabled devices allow children to access online games with chat functions, social networking sites and chat apps.

“The internet can help kids develop the life skill of digital literacy “

This new trend means that children no longer need a phone to chat with friends as they can simply use a chat app on a Wi-Fi enabled device.

The age children engage with the internet today is getting much younger. Children up to 3<sup>rd</sup> class enjoy a variety of online activities, including watching videos, playing games, searching for information, doing their homework and socialising within virtual worlds. The range of activities increases with age as children reach 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes and they begin to interact with social media sites, chat apps and online games. Examples of these include Snapchat, Instagram and FIFA

There are threats attached to many of these activities which, when ignored, can put your child in danger. The key threats to children when using age appropriate virtual worlds is the exposure and contact from strangers through fake profiles. Exposure to inappropriate content is also a significant threat on video sharing sites. When surfing the net for homework or games, children can also be exposed to inappropriate advertising. As kids progress to use social media, chat apps and online gaming, the risk of contact from strangers increases. The threat of cyber bullying also increases as more peers move online.

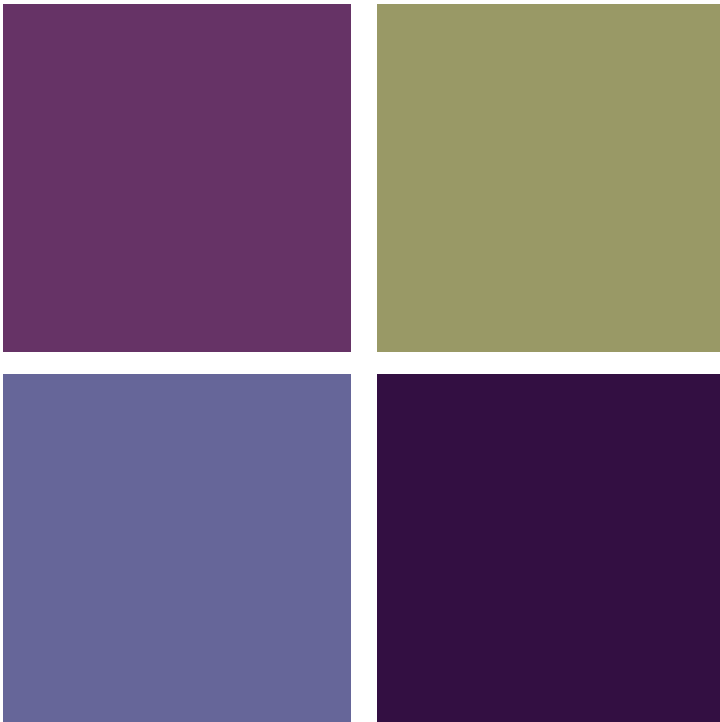
Your child will have a number of positive reasons for using the internet; education, entertainment and socialising with friends. The internet has a vast range of positive elements for our children. It helps them to develop the life skill of digital literacy. It lets them communicate with friends and family. It can even support children in accomplishing new goals such as coding, designing a poster or creating a video to share with friends and family. Despite the threats, there is no doubt that the internet is essential to a child's upbringing today.



## *The Chatbudi Mantra*

*“Treat the internet like a notice board”*

Generally speaking, the content you post on the internet can not be removed or deleted. This is true for social networks, chat apps and photo sharing sites. Before you or your child post content online, ask yourselves “would I post this on a public noticeboard?”



# Chatbudi top tips

Managing your child's digital footprint



1. If your child has access to a Wi-Fi enabled device, check what apps are downloaded
2. Research apps your child uses to determine if they are child-friendly (research before they download?)
3. Check if there is a chat function on your child's apps and games
4. Ensure your child is chatting only to real world friends when online
5. Encourage your child to access educational games on the internet and to develop their digital literacy skills responsibly

Next week: How to speak your kids language and actively mediate

# How to Speak Your Kid's Language and Actively Mediate



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'Kid's today are natives of the digital ecosystem'

Kids today are natives of the digital eco-system, leaving parents to feel like trespassers - tiptoeing around their world.

If this sounds familiar, then it's time to make yourself at home in their world, by learning how to speak their language and actively mediate through digital stumbling blocks such as cyberbullying.

It can be difficult to remember what you're trying to get across when speaking about an environment that you have a limited understanding of. Remember, the golden rule to online child safety is that **real friends = virtual friends**. The key to keeping your child safe online is to ensure that the people that they are interacting with online are also known to them in real life (friends and family).

GOLDEN RULE



Real friends  
=  
virtual friends



## Three Steps to Speaking Your Child's Digital Lingo

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### Step 1:

Know what social media channels and digital outlets your child is using (Instagram, Snapchat, Skype, Viber, YouTube...the list goes on!). Simply find out by asking your child to show you the icons on their device and talk you through the name of each app. Your child may also be accessing social media and digital outlets through websites. Take a look through the history section on the browser of the laptop or the PC your child has access to, this



do not wish to be connected with their parents online. If your child would rather not be connected with you, you should respect their online space.

### Step 3:

Once you feel comfortable using these channels, you are far better equipped to talk to your kids in a way that they will really understand.



will show you what websites they have recently visited.

### Step 2:

Download these apps on your own device and try out these channels and outlets for yourself - play around and see what they are all about. Keep in mind that if you are setting up profiles, you should ask permission in the real world before sending your child a friend request in the virtual world. It is common that children



# Examples of Questions to Ask

**Instagram:** Did you **favourite** anything today? Did you **follow** anyone new today?

**Snapchat:** What was your best Snapchat today? Have you made a Snapchat '**story**' today - tell me about it? Did you **save** or '**screenshot**' any Snapchats?

**Online gaming:** What is your favourite online game? Who do you play with? Is that a friend from school or a **virtual friend**? (We'll have more on online gaming in Chapter 6; 'Hopscotch to Headsets')

**Chat Apps:** What do you prefer to use to chat to your friends? **Skype** or **Viber**? Why? Do you chat in **groups** or one-on-one? Is there any news from groups on platforms like **WhatsApp**?

If at first you don't succeed in talking with your child 'in their language', recruit a digital champion to help. This can be a babysitter, older cousin or sibling who can speak to them about their online activity, monitor safety and flag problems to you.



**Top Tip** Two of the most popular channels for kids are Instagram and Snapchat. **Instagram** is a photo sharing app, which children use to share their pictures and to chat to one another both publically and privately. They can also follow celebrities and brands.

**Snapchat** is also a photo sharing app. However it is different in that the photo disappears after a few seconds. This app is built for sharing with friends only, but there is a new function called 'discover' which shows advertising 'snaps' that disappears after 10 seconds. Messages sent and received also disappear within 10 seconds, and users can build a 'story' over the course of a day with photos and 10 second videos, which can be seen for 24 hours by all of their friends.

*If you have trouble digesting all of these digital platforms, Chapter 4 of our e-book 'safely social' provides a beginners guide to each channel.*

## Active Mediation

By speaking to children about their digital experiences you are giving them the opportunity to open up to you

about their online world. Show your kids that you're interested in speaking their language and understanding their world. When they allow you into their online world, you can understand their feelings towards it. Are they happy when they talk about these apps? Do they show any anxiety? Are they very secretive?

It is important to have these regular conversations to ensure you are monitoring your child's relationship with the internet. Once you are able to have these chats with your children, you will be able to talk more effectively about problems they have online and the potential threats that exist.

## There are Three Key Steps to Active Mediation...

**Step 1:** Be aware of what social media channels and digital outlets your child is using (Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Skype, YouTube...the list goes on). Familiarise yourself with these apps, and their functionality. It's important to know what these apps can do, as well as knowing how to block other users, so that you know what your child can do on the app, as well as being able to guide them in blocking anyone they do not wish to be friends with.

**Step 2:** Remember to consult with your child face-to-face before sending them a virtual friend request from your own profile(s). Kids can be sensitive about their digital world and may not be open to befriending their parent online. It is often best to encourage open discussion regarding their virtual life, rather than force the issue.

### **Step 3: Virtual problems in a real way**

When your child comes to you with an online problem, take it offline immediately. Give a sense of acceptance by explaining to them that they have done the right thing by telling you. Next, ask them to talk you through the problem. Once you understand the problem take the virtual problem into the real world. If your child is following the golden rule, they will be only connected with their real friends. If it is a case of cyberbullying the key is to speak to a teacher at school or the parent of the bully to resolve the problem. If it is a 'virtual friend' block the user from your child's profile, ensure the child has privacy settings on and delete and block any other 'virtual friends'.



'It is important to have these regular conversations to ensure you are monitoring your child's relationship with the internet''





There are many other problems which can occur aside from cyberbullying or communication from a stranger, such as exposure to content which is not age appropriate, exposure to unwanted advertising and internet addiction. More detailed solutions to these problems will be outlined in chapter 7 'Your Child's Online Safety Belt'.



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+ Next Week: The Virtual Schoolyard Bully

## The Virtual Schoolyard Bully



Cyberbullying is when one child targets another child with humiliating, embarrassing or threatening behaviour through the Internet or a mobile device. Chatbudi has visited classrooms across Dublin to speak to children about what cyberbullying means to them. When we ask have you heard of cyberbullying, arms shoot up in the air. However, when the children are asked to tell us what a cyberbully is, sometimes they are not entirely sure.

Cyberbullying comes in many shapes and forms, in order to help children better understand cyberbullying, Chatbudi has created cyberbully personas to help parents and children alike to understand the fine lines between normal behaviour and bullying.

Here are three common examples:

### 1. The Accidental Cyberbully

Many children participate in cyberbullying without even being aware that they're doing it. Although a child may not generate abusive content, if they like, share or comment on it publically within their own network, it is cyberbullying.

A common form of accidental cyberbullying is exclusion. This occurs when a child organises a party and excludes another child in the class - this publically available information can alienate the excluded child. This can also occur when children tag themselves in posts at play dates, parties or activities where another child may be excluded.



Another form of accidental cyberbullying is when a child posts embarrassing content concerning another child, and is often in the form of a photograph. It is important that every child asks permission of another child if they wish to post a photo of them.



## 2. The Angry Cyberbully

Children can decide to take their anger out online. For example, posting an embarrassing photo or a screen shot of a conversation online because they are jealous or annoyed. These children are acting impulsively on their emotions, without thinking through the repercussions. It is important to prevent your child from becoming a cyberbully by highlighting to them the potential

aftermath of upsetting a friend through a digital platform.

Educate your children by explaining that once you upload content on the internet it is there permanently. They can say sorry but they can never remove it; anyone could have it saved, forwarded, shared or screenshotted, even if your child themselves has deleted it. We use a simple rule to get this message across - it's called the t-shirt rule; if you wouldn't print it on a t-shirt and wear it around for your friends, family and teachers to see forever...don't post it online. This type of cyberbullying

can be a vicious circle; the victim may not know they are being targeted and in their anger they can retaliate and strike back becoming the bully. It's important to monitor your child's emotions when talking about the internet and online communication.

## 3. The Real Cyberbully

This is the cyberbully that engages with antisocial behaviour online out of boredom, malice or entertainment. This is the most damaging form of bullying and often the least detectable.





An example of this is a child setting up a false persona online of a child in their class and using it to chat to other children spreading rumours and posting embarrassing content.

This is most damaging because it may affect your child in the offline world - they do not need access to the internet to be a victim.

The best advice here is to regularly search the internet for your child and do not jump to conclusions that they are lying if they tell you it is not them. Investigate further and contact the cyberbully's guardians directly to resolve. If you discover a false

persona of your child online - report it and make the child's school, clubs and social groups aware. Get your friends and family on board too, to report the persona to the social network in question (i.e. Instagram or Facebook etc.) - there is power in numbers. Finally reassure your child that they are not in trouble of any kind, and that you are there to ensure that no harm comes to them.

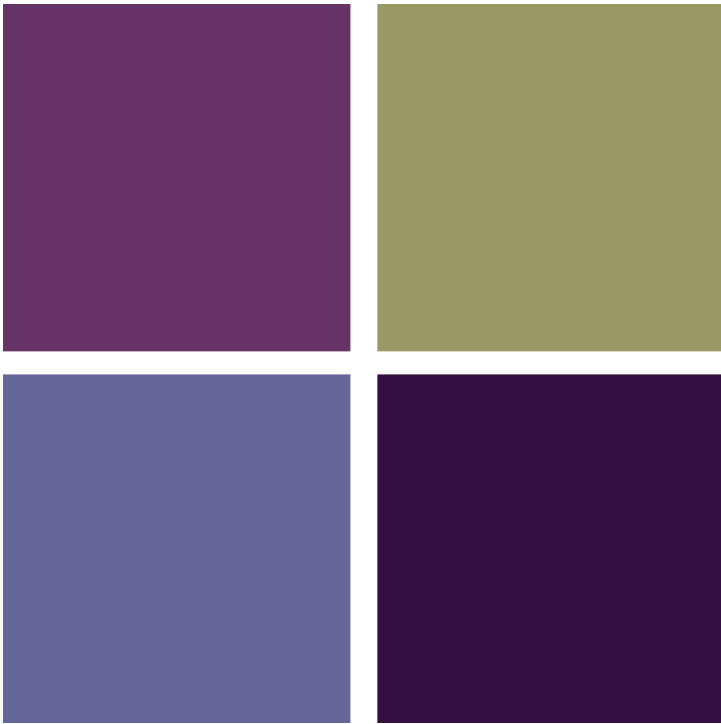
This type of bullying can also involve a cyberbully setting up a fake profile and using this to attack victims, or it can be a

child using their own profile posting nasty comments on another child's profile, photos, posts etc.

This type of bullying is extremely isolating for the victim; again it is so important to speak to your child about their feeling towards being online.

We encourage children to use the 'Stop, Block, Tell' rule when they see cyberbullying online. This prevents the child getting engaged with, caught up in or dragged into the bullying, and that they tell a parent or adult they trust.





At Chatbudi, we speak to parents regularly and understand the concerns they have around cyberbullying. If you have any unanswered questions, or if you're seeking advice on this or any other related topic, please e-mail [aisling@chatbudi.com](mailto:aisling@chatbudi.com). We can also include your question in our Facebook community forum if you wish, where you can get advice from other parents. We will also answer you directly with our own advice.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How can I tell if my child is a victim of cyberbullying?

Symptoms of a child being cyberbullied are very similar to traditional 'school yard bullying' i.e. low self-esteem, nightmares, avoiding school, changing routine and presenting signs of anxiety. However, the physical act of bullying is not visible. It cannot be heard like name calling in a school yard or seen through cuts and bruises. A cyberbully is a silent bully, and just like traditional 'school yard bullying' the victim is likely to stay silent too. For this reason it is important to ask children about their social media experience and associated feelings.

### 2. What do I do when a child tells me they are a victim of cyberbullying?

Your child opening up is half the battle in solving a cyberbullying case. Firstly, praise your child for telling you and assure them that they will not get into any trouble. Ask your child to show you the cyberbullying evidence; if it is a child that you know take the problem offline and into the real world immediately by speaking to their parents or teachers. If it is a person or child that you do not know, ensure that they are blocked from your child's site and take the opportunity to educate your child on the importance of keeping their social media profiles private, and of the dangers regarding speaking to strangers

### **3. My child won't talk to me about their experience online - how can I keep them safe?**

If you do not succeed at first with talking with your child, recruit a digital champion to help. This can be a babysitter, older cousin or sibling who can speak to them regularly and help monitor their safety. We encourage children to find a chatbudi. Someone they know and trust that can help them stay safe on their exciting digital journey. Their relationship with their chatbudi is a two-way street. Children can educate their chatbudi on all things digital, such as apps and the Internet, and the Chatbudi should take this opportunity to listen to the child and monitor the emotions they express about their online activity.

### **4. How do I know if my child is a cyberbully?**

We have seen that children can be accidental bullies or that they can bully acting on emotions; in these cases it is usually quite easy to resolve. When we speak to children who have engaged in such behaviour that tell us about the anxiety and regret that they experience after. A simple question to ask is "have you ever done something online that you regretted?" It is also a good idea to look at your child's online activity with them, and if you spot something that points towards accidental or angry bullying, ask 'how would your friend feel when they see that?' If your child is involved in 'real cyberbullying' it can be difficult to detect. It is likely that this child has been involved with a fake profile and/or secretive behaviour. If this is the case, it's a good idea to look through your internet history, to see if you detect any unusual activity or anything suspicious, and to ask your child to sit down with you and show you around their profiles and activities themselves.

### **5. What can I do if my child is a cyberbully?**

If you have detected that your child has been involved in accidental or angry cyberbullying behaviour, assure them that although they made a mistake it is possible to make better in the real world, however it will remain permanently in the online world. You must empower them to rekindle their friendships by apologising in the real world to the person they hurt. If your child is actively cyberbullying in a 'real' way it can be difficult to detect and resolve. If you notice suspicious behaviour, speak to your child about the dangers of cyberbullying and encourage open conversations about their online identity and behaviour.



+ Next Week: Social Media

# Safely Social

Explain to your child that they should act on social media as they do in real life; with respect and dignity

It can be difficult to keep up to date with your child's social networks, as there are constantly new platforms emerging. However, this chapter will give you some general tips about managing your child's safety on social media platforms, as well as offering our top tips on the most popular platforms.

## **General Tips:**

- ✓ Most social network sites comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), and rather than collecting verifiable consent from parents for kids under 13, they simply restrict usage to those over 13 to avoid the issue. Most kids lie about their age to get around this when joining a platform



- ✓ Respect on social media is a fundamental matter. There is often a disconnection for kids between real life and their digital world, which can cause them to do things online that they would never do in real life. Explain to your child that they should act on social media as they do in real life; with respect and dignity
- ✓ It's vital to speak to your child before they join any social media sites, and talk about the potential risks. Educate them about responsible usage, what to do if they encounter any issues and discuss what platform might suit them best. We would always recommend that they start their social media journey with a child-friendly app, which has appropriate safety settings and features

- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the platform that your child is joining, and know its features and capabilities. Then sit down with your child to set up their profile, ensure that it is set to private so they are not visible to strangers, and that their profile does not contain any overly personal information which could leave them vulnerable
- ✓ Sit down regularly with your child for them to show you around their profiles. This empowers them to work with you towards a safer social media experience as opposed to against you. Try not to have a set time and day that you do it, as you run the risk of your child removing content, settings or friends that they don't want you to see if they know that you always check at a

specific time

- ✓ Keep track of your child's password. You should be able to check it whenever you feel the need to, and a condition of them being on any social networks should be that they inform you of any password changes
- ✓ Have a cut-off time for social media and general phone use in the evening. The Yale Medical Group recommends that all devices are switched off at least an hour before bedtime, to avoid the blue light technology interfering with your child's sleep patterns and even their alertness the following day





## Generating Content

A growing trend among children is content generation. Photo and video content is particularly popular amongst children, and has never been easier to generate, with cameras on their phones and tablets. Many will share their content on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. The danger here is that children can expose personal information such as their school, their address, and their routines to a public audience, leaving them highly vulnerable. The advice here is to encourage children to take videos if this is a hobby of theirs, but ask that they verify them with you before they upload.

## Speak their language

Show kids you're interested in

speaking their language and understanding their digital world. When kids allow you into their online social world, you can understand their feeling towards it. Are they happy when they talk about these apps, do they show any anxiety, are they very secretive? It is important to have these regular conversations to ensure you are monitoring your child's relationship with the internet.

- Did you favourite anything today?  
Follow anyone new today?
- Any good Snapchats today? Who are your 'best friends' on Snapchat?
- Any news from your groups on WhatsApp today? Do you chat in groups or one and one? Do you know everyone in your chat group?



# Social Networking Platforms – What You Need to Know

## Instagram

- ✓ Most popular app among children we have spoken with from 4th class up, and this is supported by the findings of the 'Net Children Go Mobile' report in 2014, whereby 42% of 9-16 year olds said this was the platform they use most often
- ✓ It is a media editing and sharing app, which facilitates interaction through taking, editing, sharing, and commenting on photos and videos
- ✓ While a lot of the usage is very innocent, there are of course risks associated with Instagram. Inappropriate content is a primary threat on the platform, as many kids follow celebrities (such as Rihanna, Miley Cyrus and Kim Kardashian) that post inappropriate and explicit content.
- ✓ Some are also using the platform to engage in cyberbullying, through nasty or aggressive comments underneath photos
- ✓ For many kids, amassing a large number of followers is part and parcel of Instagram, so it is vital to discuss the associated dangers of having strangers following your child with them
- ✓ Instagram's default profile setting is public, but it is relatively easy to make private. Posts can also be made private, and viewable only to the followers you have approved to view them
- ✓ It is important to be aware that anyone who followed you before you set the profile to private will still be able to see all content posted (even if you don't follow them), unless you specifically block them.

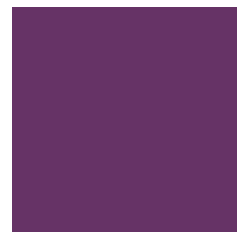
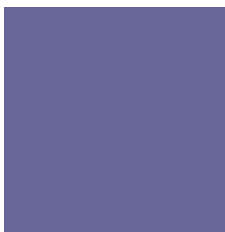


## Snapchat

- ✓ Very popular among children in the 4th class and above age category
- ✓ Children take a picture or video, and send it to their Snapchat friends
- ✓ The photo or video disappears after a chosen time of between 1 and 10 seconds
- ✓ While many kids and teens use it for the spontaneity factor, to share fun images with a friend that they will then disappear, this app now poses a few risks
- ✓ There are a few workarounds which prevent the photo or video disappearing after the selected time - a simple screenshot of the picture can be saved (the sender is notified that it has been taken) or unaffiliated apps such as Snap Save and Snap Crack save each and every Snapchat received by the recipient in question, without the sender receiving a notification
- ✓ It can also be a popular means for cyberbullying, as the evidence disappears (or is supposed to disappear) as soon as it has displayed for a maximum of 10 seconds

## Facebook

- ✓ 80% of kids who use social networking sites use Facebook as their primary profile (Net Children Go Mobile, 2014)
- ✓ Facebook has a 'real names' policy, meaning that most kids display their full names on their profile. Profile photos don't have to show a child's face, but 83% of kids report that their profile photo does show their face
- ✓ The platform has a huge range of functionality, from facilitating conversation and sharing photos and videos, to reviewing restaurants and supporting charitable causes
- ✓ Facebook has certain safety settings for users aged between 13 and 18, such as restricting advertising for items such as alcohol, dietary supplements, online gambling sites and other inappropriate content. However, as a lot of younger kids lie about their age to join Facebook (as they are under the required age of 13), they often set it to being quite a bit older, and so, may be exposed to this content, and not protected by the limited safety settings put in place by Facebook
- ✓ Again, as with most platforms, it can be used to cyberbully and engage in nasty or inappropriate behaviour. Peer harassment is the most common threat associated with Facebook



+ Next Week: Stranger Danger