



TikTok is in the spotlight once again in the USA as it faces being banned, but is this just a TikTok problem?

Allegations of spying, data harvesting, obtaining eye, voice and face information of it's users are some of the issues being raised, but is this TikTok, or all of social media?

Social Media companies are well known for keeping the big computer (algorithm) close to their chest and very rarely disclose anything about how the information is used that they obtain through their apps. TikTok was brought before USA Congress this week, and grilled about how it uses it's information. It in fact highlighted global concerns around the use of data from all social media apps, including how it obtains the data in the first place and where can it pass that data on to, including selling that data.



Minecraft Legends releases on 18th April

Free to download and play, Minecraft legends will quickly become a popular game because of it coming from the Minecraft Franchise. You can team up with others to explore the world and completing levels. Like every new game, it's an opportunity to explore the world together and we are encouraging parents & carers to pick up a controller, play when they can get the time and promote the conversation of how games are so important to so many children's life.

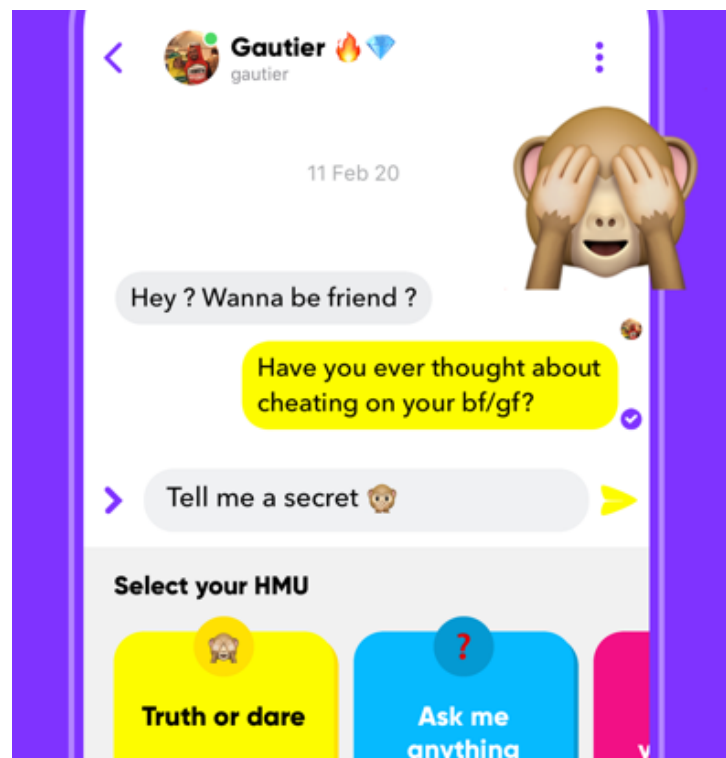
(We are in no way being paid to advertise this game)

Wizz - The 'Tinder For Teens' or just another Whatsapp?

Teens are talking about it and now children as young as 9 are talking about it too. The app that promotes connections with complete strangers and getting to know them, that has similar features to dating apps like Tinder, Hinge & Bumble.

This is a free to download app, where you create yourself an account and profile before beginning to search for people to connect to. There is moderation and a reporting system, but the behaviours encouraged could lead to significant safeguarding issues.

[Find out more...](#)





The importance of children having their own account

Do you currently let your children use your YouTube account, or Xbox account, maybe your Netflix account? This can be an easy thing to allow to happen but the long term impacts can make things harder for you down the line.

Here are some quick reasons why;

- The way that Social Media works, whatever you're searching for, buying, videos you watch and posts you interact with will also give suggestions to your child based on your behaviours.
- On YouTube, TikTok & other video platforms, the information it gathers on you will give you suggested videos based on your likes and personality as an adult. Sometimes, this content isn't appropriate for a child but it will suggest the same content to your child despite this.
- It's easier to set rules and boundaries that don't personally restrict you, once they have their own accounts on everything they use.



Do you have your content and account filters set on apps like Amazon Prime, Netflix and even Disney+? If you don't set them, they'll likely be subjected to the trailers which is often enough for the bad dreams, and enticing to watch the whole film without you knowing.

[Find out more...](#)

If Not now...

WHEN?

45% SAID

**THEY SPEND SO MUCH
TIME ON THEIR
DEVICE BECAUSE
THEY'RE**

BORED

52% of CHILDREN believe their **PARENTS
AREN'T** involved in their online activities

75% of **PARENTS** said they **ARE** involved.

NEW Useful Guides

Every month we produce new guides and blogs about important topics. Take a look at these five for this month.



[Fall Guys](#)



[YouTube](#)



[TikTok](#)



[Disney+](#)



[Social Media Setup Tips](#)



Pan
European
Game
Information

Age Ratings - Avoid the confusion.

There is a lot of confusion around Age Ratings within App Stores, Game Stores and more. It originates around there being several different versions of age ratings, an AppStore version (Apple / Google Store / Amazon Store) and different age ratings depending on the country they're determined from.

What should you focus on?

- For games, look for the PEGI age rating. This is the sticker on a physical disc, or the age rating with the words "PEGI" underneath it. Any other age rating symbol within the word "PEGI" underneath it, is not a PEGI age rating.
- For apps, whether it's social media or other apps, if you need an account it's likely to be an age rating 13.
- Do NOT focus on the app store age rating, although this can help, every app store has a different set of guidance to abide by when they're grading their apps onto the store. So often you will see an app which is PEGI 12, but on the Google Play Store it shows as a "4+"

Why should i take age ratings seriously?

- This is an issue raised often, by kids and now also by adults. The simple answer is yes, but it stretches further than that.
- Don't rely on age rating alone, notice how your child acts when on apps & games, if you see that they cannot emotionally regulate or handle an app or game, it can be helpful to bring it to their attention, or give them an alternative.



Have you noticed your child watching YouTube in a different way recently? It's likely YouTube Shorts...

The surge of popularity in YouTube Shorts comes as no surprise. It presents you with shorter videos, at a faster pace.

It's also noticeably similar to TikTok in its format and that is no mistake. Is it the same as TikTok? Conceptually, yes. Content & how content is 'pushed' to you, no.

Should you be worried?

We think this is a natural progression for children watching videos online, they're wanting it faster, in shorter bursts, for a longer period of time. The question we would have for you in your home is, how is it effecting them day by day, in doing other tasks? Socially, behaviours, sleep, hobbies & more. We would have more concern that it's becoming harder to break away from the very thought consuming world of TikTok & YouTube Shorts.

What can you do?

- Encourage regular breaks. You can do this just as part of household routine, so that they come away from the content often. "How often?" we hear you ask, well, this is subjective and there is no concrete evidence to give you but we would suggest every hour there should be a 5 minute break. If the breaks can be made longer, that's great, but they don't have to be.
- Sit with them and watch. Yes, you may think "This is trash" but to them it isn't. Show an interest, talk about it, have conversation and keep building those bridges into their online world on a regular basis.



Xbox Family App

Xbox Family Settings app allows you to never need to touch the console again to check on all the settings. It can now all be done at your fingertips. Bed times, wake times, game time limits, restrictions on downloading new games, seeing friends list and who they're talking to, setting age restrictions, turning off the mic on a headset... the list goes on, and on, and on. It's made to make your life easier.

We would recommend starting small with the restrictions, and going from there!

Switch Parental Control App

If you're getting a Nintendo Switch for Christmas, or already have one, this is a useful app for you. Switch Parental Controls is a free to download app on your smart phone.

It has less features than regular parental apps, as the capabilities of a Switch are simply less too than a similar console or device.

You can set bed times, wake times, restrictions to downloading games, as well as authorise-only for in-game purchases. You can also review the amount of screen-time they've had on a daily and weekly timeline.



Apple Family Sharing

Niche app, but if you're an 'all apple' family, you can set everyone up in your Apple Family Sharing account. Everyone needs an email created, and to be signed in on their device, with their account, but after this there is very little setup involved.

A big and relatively new feature we like, despite how sad it may feel to have to have this is a setting within ScreenTime that detects nudity on the phone and will alert you as the parent. It won't show you the nudity but it'll tell you what app it was seen on, to prompt a conversation.

