



# Live streaming: The dangers of self-broadcasting

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**In recent years, there has been a significant increase in popularity of people broadcasting clips of their lives on social media.**

We have seen a number of new platforms and extensions created, such as Periscope, Tencent, SnapChat, Twitch and even Facebook and Instagram's own Live channels. Where once people using the apps were classed as the early adopters, it is safe to say that live streaming has now gone mainstream, and appears to be attracting a younger audience.

As educational professionals, and those that are there to ensure young people are staying safe online, we should all be aware of the different threats that the online world can pose. Live streaming now plays a big part in the ongoing battle to keep young people safe online.

As live streaming is now more widely accessible and consumed by the public, it is also more likely that tweens and teens will start to use it too, especially if they already have an app that supports it like Facebook or Instagram for instance. By incorporating live streaming into their existing apps, it has made it easier for these businesses to compete and gain traction, since they come with an existing loyal user base.

It's important, therefore, for teachers and staff to be aware of such platforms and apps due to the risks involved with live streaming.

## So what are the risks?

With all social media, there comes risk. Risk associated with privacy, data and vulnerabilities. Where videos could once be censored and taken down, when acts unfold live over the internet, it is often a lot less containable.

Most recently, there have been some horrific and disturbing results, with murder, rape and other horrific violent crimes occurring in real-time on live streaming channels. One of the latest events occurred in the Czech Republic where by a young woman inadvertently live-streamed her own death on Facebook when her friend drove into the barrier on a high-speed road.

It is not only the threat of young people being exposed to uncensored and horrific content that live streaming poses, but there are risks as well to those who are shown on live streaming videos that need to be considered. For instance:

- The issue of consent: When live streaming, it is broadcast instantly for all to see, so can quickly involve those who do not want to be included or haven't given their consent.
- Accidentally releasing their location: For instance, if a teen live streams on their street, everyone will know where they live.

- Revealing intimate information: Live streaming could lead to young people revealing too much personal information about themselves. Even publishing live video in their own bedrooms could give away clues to their identity or other personal information.
- Not knowing who's watching: Live streaming services have limited privacy controls, and so it is hard to know who is watching and prevent people accessing the stream.

With all of this in mind, it is important as educators to teach young people about the dangers of live streaming apps. It's not just the parents' responsibility, but all those who play a part in keeping young people safe in an increasingly online world. Have them think about why are they using them – are they aware that they could potentially come across something scarring? Or if they live stream themselves, are they conscious of the information about themselves that they are revealing to the world? Ask them the question, 'would you be happy to see an image or video you share plastered all over Piccadilly Circus?' If the answer is no, then they shouldn't be sharing it at all.

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