



**KIDS ONLINE
A PARENT'S GUIDE**

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Hi parent!

BRIS (Children's Rights in Society) and Prince Carl Philip and Princess Sofia's Foundation have joined forces to make this book – a guide to empower and support you as a parent to talk to your child about what happens online. The truth is, most kids actually want to talk to a grown-up about their online experiences. But many of them think that you wouldn't understand.

Kids and teens worry about things online they feel parents don't have a clue about. They might also fear getting blamed for things that have happened, especially if they have done something they know their parents are concerned about. Parents, on the other hand, often feel they are lacking in knowledge about new apps or trends. This gap between kids and grown-ups is the biggest hurdle to conversation. And that's what we want this book to change.

To make this book, we've consulted the true online experts: kids and teens who use the internet every day. They've shared their wisdom and everyday anecdotes, told us about what they think is fun and good, what they like and dislike. The book also brings up the things that are not so good, sometimes even tough and difficult. All of it compiled from interviews with kids and teens between 10 and 18 years old. But also from research, children's conversations with BRIS (Children's Rights in Society) and personal stories that children have sent to the Prince Carl Philip and Princess Sofia's Foundation website viberattar.se.

In fact, the everyday lives of kids and teens online aren't that different from their everyday lives offline. Online life is mostly about ordinary things like hanging out with friends, doing homework, watching movies or YouTube clips. But one thing is for certain: kids want their parents close and present. Also online.

Supportive greetings,

*/ Prince Carl Philip, Princess Sofia,
and Magnus Jägerskog, Secretary General of BRIS*

How this book works

All quotes are from interviews, research and conversations with kids and teens between 10 and 18 years old – but the names have been changed. Throughout the book, you'll notice that certain words are highlighted and stand out from the rest of the text. These words are explained in a dictionary at the end of the book.

The book is divided into three parts. First, a few chapters that describe the online lives of kids and teens in general terms. Then, a few chapters about difficult things that few children ever have to face, but that are important for you as an adult to know about. Finally, a section with tips for you as a parent with kids online. The contents of this book is available 24/7 on nاتفöräldrar.se.

Please share your own experiences from being a parent with kids online on social media, using the hashtag #nاتفöräldrar. This will create a library of experiences under #nاتفöräldrar in social media.

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WHY DO KIDS SPEND SO MUCH TIME ONLINE?

"I always check my phone before getting out of bed. If I miss responding to a message the other person might take it personally. At breakfast I watch youtube videos and text my friends in a group chat." - Maria 14

"It's quick and easy to talk to people who live far away and you can share the things you like!" - Emanuel 10

"Many youtubers I follow are like my friends. I really like them, for real." - Selma 11

"Socialising with others is fun and it's easier to meet people online. Here I can show who I really am." - Tilda 14

"To have someone who texts you good night when everything is at its worst, that makes it possible to go sleep that night. It feels like someone cares, even though you've never met." - Ermir 12

"You're nobody if you're not online. That's how it is. You don't exist. Hard to explain but people think you're a bit weird if you don't have a social channel. You don't have to be active but you've got to have a channel. Or else you don't exist." - Maja 15

"I love browsing around and I get inspired by other people." - Sara 13

What is a **meme**, who is **Therese Lindgren** and when did MTV stop being a thing? As a parent, it's not entirely easy to know your way around the thick jungle that is the internet today. But the thing is, you don't have to understand everything. The **online** culture your kids are growing up in is just like youth culture has always been: difficult to understand for outsiders but meaning everything for those in the know.

Almost everything that's important in your child's life – friends, interests, culture and dreams – can now be experienced through a screen. The **internet** enables your child to explore, discover, and find like-minded people who feel and think the same way they do. Whether it's about music, make-up, soccer, fashion, Formula 1, politics or games, your child can quickly and easily relate to other kids online. Who, in turn, can relate to your child. The fear of missing out is a feeling we can all relate to. A feeling that is reinforced by our cell phones constantly feeding us information about where people are and what they are doing. To feel a sense of community, to belong, is perhaps our strongest need as human beings. We want to mean something and be important, be part of a group, a crew, whether it's a small group of two, three people or a larger group. That feeling has become a saying online known as **FOMO**, which stands for Fear Of Missing Out. No wonder many kids keep their phones by their side 24/7.

It's also no wonder that kids are watching less television than they used to, but instead spend more time online. It's simply more fun for young people to check out **clips**, **vlogs** and **pods** made by other young people.

Tip: Listen carefully

It can be frustrating to see your child constantly in front of a screen. We know. Be mindful of how screen time affects your child, but also consider how much the internet really means to them. Three simple things to check off:

What is your child watching? – There’s a big difference between doing homework or socialising with friends versus binge watching **pranks** on YouTube for hours on end.

When is your child in front of a screen? – Sometimes it’s okay, sometimes it’s not okay. When everyone is getting ready for school and work, or at bedtime, for example, are not the best times to be in front of a screen.

How is screen time affecting your child? – All kids are different, just like adults. Some kids have a harder time putting their screen down, even though they actually think it’s become too much. For other kids, that’s not a problem. Every child is unique and has different needs. The appropriate amount of screen time is highly individual. That’s why general rules for “this much is enough” won’t work. You will have to determine what’s best for your child.

The more you nurture your relationship with your child, the greater the chances that you’ll be able to agree on how (and how much) to use the internet. And if you do agree, your child will also be understanding if one day you’ll have to draw a line in order to protect them.

What you as a parent need to be on top of is how your child is feeling and seems to be functioning in their daily lives. You can do that by taking a positive interest and respectfully ask to be included in your child's daily life – both online and offline. If needed, have a family meeting about screen time and how to use the internet. One tip is to establish rules for everyone in the family to follow – including you as a parent.

Facts

Research shows that clear parental boundaries also teaches children to set their own boundaries and respect their own integrity to a greater extent. When setting boundaries, first listen and try to understand your child's point of view, then decide what's best for your child and for the family as a whole. Being heard and taken seriously are factors that help your child build self-confidence and self-esteem.



**IS THERE A
DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN LIFE
ONLINE AND
LIFE OFFLINE?**

Is there a difference between life online and life offline?

*"Even though I **snapchat** with my friends, I'd rather meet **IRL**. Any day of the week."* - Tamara 14

*"It's good because you can share information, you don't need to have a bunch of paper in a drawer, you can just keep it in the **cloud**. You can talk to people you would never talk to without the internet. You learn stuff much faster than you would with a newspaper."* - Elias 14

*"As a teen you live in the physical world, but you use the digital world to communicate with other teens. I have friends in real life and online. I'm in digital contact with all of them, but some of them I only know through **digital channels**."* - Kajsa 14

*"You can meet new people, and it's good for communicating with others. Like a group of friends planning a **LAN party**. Instead of talking one on one, they plan everything in a **group chat** on **social** media. When they're done planning and decided on a time there can be no misunderstandings because all the history is right there in the group chat, so if someone forgets the time they can just go back and check."* - Jakob 13

*"You feel more brave **online**. You can be more angry and give more compliments, I'd never give so many compliments in real life. Online it just becomes, like, more of everything. You don't really think about what you do. It's so easy to just send it."*

- Hanna 13

*“Everything that happens online could happen anywhere. You can be just as alienated in real life as you can online. When I was the new kid in the class, at first they wouldn't let me join their **Snapchat groups**. But later they let me join. After that I made friends quickly. You dare to talk more in digital channels.”* - Filippa 12

“Online I dare to tell the truth. There, a lot of people know. The hard part is how I would tell someone that I actually meet.” - Lukas 13

In the digital day and age, children live simultaneously in two different worlds. For parents who grew up with a landline phone, this poses a lot of questions. Because even if 99 per cent of adults use the internet – working, communicating, sharing experiences, **clips** and news – just like young people do, we still have a different notion of the distinction between life online and life offline. We have more experience separating our existence between **offline** and **online**. That doesn't mean that we don't understand or know how to use the internet. But there's a gap between kids and grown-ups: many adults feel that they're not a real part of their children's online lives and many kids and teens feel that grown-ups aren't present.

Tip: Don't ban

Life online is like life offline. Like all other aspects of life, we need to learn how things work – children need the support of grown-ups to be able to understand and handle the situation online. Sure, it can be tempting to ban the cell phone if something difficult happens to your child on social media. But taking the phone away doesn't solve the problem. If someone is mean to your child at soccer practice, the solution isn't to ban your child from playing soccer. The same, of course, is true for the internet.

Kids often develop strategies for dealing with difficult things online. Ask your child about difficult situations that may arise online – and how they typically react when it happens. If needed, support your child in finding different strategies. Sometimes a child needs help in order to say no or stop. As a parent, you can help your child by providing good arguments and encouraging them to dare stand up for themselves.

Facts

Online and offline are also related legally. What's considered a violation of someone's rights offline may be just as much of a violation online. As the internet has increasingly become a key part of our everyday lives, online legislation has been clarified and strengthened, the latest example being a new law called unlawful intrusion of integrity, which makes it illegal to distribute pictures or information for the purpose of harming another person, for example by posting sexually explicit pictures or pictures of a person in a vulnerable situation.



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**PARENTAL
ADVISORY**
EXPLICIT CONTENT

KIDS' DAILY ONLINE LIFE - WIRED 24/7

"I have quite a few internet friends that I'm talking to and with them I dare to be myself regardless of what other people think." - Vilja 13

"What's positive about the internet is you get the news faster, it's easier to talk to friends, you can get to know new people and it's easier to discover new cultures." - Daniel 13

"If you buy something online you should read the comments to see if people got their delivery or not. So you don't get scammed. I read a lot of comments." - Heléne 11

"I don't feel like an outsider, I feel like an insider." - Emmy 11

"It's quick and easy to talk to people who live far away and you can share the things you like!" - Hedvig 13

For your child, the daily life online is just like the daily life in general. Full of friends, school, film, music, love, one-sided love, and sometimes things even tougher than that. Throughout our lives, we learn how things work and how to deal with difficulties that we face along the way. Children are usually very good at developing their own strategies for dealing with things that happen – in life and online. But they might also need adult support in order to understand and develop effective strategies. This is where you as a parent are important, for things big and small. Be a parent who supports, listens, helps, strengthens and encourages. If it's one thing children need, it's fearless grown-ups who can make them feel safe and secure.

Tip: Be curious

There are two important safeguards when it comes to children's online lives. First, that children have a grown-up they can turn to who will listen, understand, and act in their best interest. And second, that children have their own strategies for understanding, managing and trusting that they can handle difficult situations.

Find out what strategies your child is using to get by in their online life. Research shows that young people are generally more trained in source criticism than older people are. Kids and teens learn how to evaluate information through constantly exploring the internet. You as a parent offer support simply by being there, by being curious and listening to your child. Don't judge your child, even if he or she has done something you think is inappropriate or a cause for concern. Support and strengthen your child. Children have a right to support from a calm adult with their feet on the ground.





COMMUNICATING ONLINE - LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOURS

"When a friend writes me I can't tell if she's upset or not. I think she might be, just because she can't show any expressions. It's better if you add an emoji. Then you get it. So that she doesn't think I'm upset or angry or sad." - Emmy 11

"One thing I've seen happen a lot on social media is that people write compliments that they don't mean and are actually being nasty even though it doesn't seem that way. They might write you look so good, but I know the person isn't really serious but just being mean." - Märta 15

"Emojis make it easy to write what you feel. Or if you just want to say something but you don't know how." - Sam 10

"You just make the words shorter and shorter so you don't have to write so much. Everyone understands abbreviations and different expressions. We use them all the time." - Vendela 13

"I talk to my friends about difficult things when I see them in person. I'd never talk about difficult things online." - Alva 14

"We have a Snapchat group where I talk to my classmates after school. There's a lot of humor and jokes, fun." - Mohamed 10

"I wrote something mean to someone on Instagram, but from a fake account and now it has become this big deal and I can't admit it was me." - Erik 12

"It's easier to be mean online than face to face." - Matilda 15

"It's not easier to talk online. It's harder. I can't see who I'm talking to." - Alice 14

It's easier to say things online, but also more difficult. There's no eye contact and it's possible to be anonymous, which can feel safe in a way. It can make you dare more, make it easier to approach others and seek their support. You can also dare to show more of who you really are, to be more loving and talkative than you otherwise might have been.

But when you can't hear someone's tone or see their body language, the other person is free to interpret the words any way they want. Which can easily lead to misunderstandings. The fact that there is a "distance" in time online, between when we say something and when we receive a reply, also makes it easier to write things that aren't always thought through. This goes for everyone, kids and grown-ups alike.

The language used online is a language in constant change. Tremendously creative and often quite logical, like when numbers are combined with letters, foreign expressions are incorporated into Swedish, and entire sentences are boiled down to just a few characters. Speed is of the essence. Sometimes communicating entirely without written text, like on the **app** Snapchat where people stay in touch by sending each other pictures in a rapid, constant flow.

Hashtags are a way to come together around certain topics, within pop culture, for example. But also topics that are difficult to talk about, like mental health, LGBT issues and sexual abuse. When topics like these are raised by **influencers** or others online, it enables young people to talk about them. Kids and teens can create forums where they can share their own experiences and post texts and images. Online, they are validated and feel seen, believed and less lonely. The internet makes it possible to talk about the hard stuff.

Tip: Be open to change

The language used in your child's digital life is being developed through cell phones, games and apps. For you as a parent, this language sometimes contains new expressions that may be difficult to understand. The language is rapidly changing and differs between different groups and geographical areas, just like in the offline world. If you see or hear a word that you don't understand, ask your child. It could be a good growth experience for the child to be the one doing the explaining and teaching for a change who's doing the explaining and teaching for a change.

Be curious about how your child is communicating online, and how they interact with others. Does your child feel that there is any difference between communicating online and IRL? Are there certain things that are easier or more difficult to say or talk about? Has your child ever felt misunderstood or written things they didn't feel good about afterwards? How did that turn out for your child and what did they do about it?

Encourage your child to tell you if something doesn't feel right when interacting with others online. Make your child feel safe and trust that the two of you can talk about anything – no matter if it's other people or your child who's written or done something online that doesn't feel right. It's important that you listen without judgment.

Facts

Every year, the Swedish Academy announces new words to be added to the official dictionary of the Swedish language. What's less known, is that every year Swedish kids invent many times more words than that, often with inspiration from other languages.



BECOME A PART OF YOUR KID'S DAILY LIFE ONLINE

*"If my parents had asked me what's going on **online** I would have told them. It would be fun because then they would understand what I'm doing."* - Ante 11

"When you talk to your kids about the internet, don't turn it into an interrogation. That makes kids defiant. Talk to your kids like you were friends. Show them that you're actually interested." - Bella 16

"I like that my parents know everything I do. That makes me feel safe. If I talk about love with my friend I want my mom and dad to know about it." - Jordan 10

*"My dad follows me on **Instagram**. He always sends me these weird **smileys**. Then I know that he can see me and what I'm doing."* - Yusuf 10

"If there's a fight in a chat one parent might call the other parent. I usually show my mom. She says I shouldn't keep writing because then it just keeps getting longer and longer." - Viola 12

*"It would have been fun to watch **Youtube** together. Watch funny videos that you can laugh about. But we never watch together."* - Victor 11

"Don't be afraid to ask your kids about how things are online. Show that you're interested, maybe don't ask directly about relationships, but in a more open way. For example, you might ask: Did you post a new picture on Instagram today? If the kid says yes you can say: That's great, I think you post such nice pictures. Then the kids feel that you support them in their digital life." - Frida 14

To ask or not to ask, that is the question. What we do know is that a majority of kids and teens WANT to talk to grown-ups about what's going on in their cell phones and online. Most likely, you think it's natural to talk to your child about everything else that goes on in life. How's school, how they're feeling, what they're doing in their spare time and with their friends. Just like it's a given that you talk about boundaries and how to avoid getting into trouble, that there are people who are fair but also people who are not. Today, the internet is a natural and integrated part of life for kids and teens. Make talking about what happens online – the fun stuff as well as the difficult stuff – as natural as talking about what happens offline.

Why I wouldn't tell a grown-up if I was being treated badly online.

"Because my parents don't want me to be on social media or play games since I'm 'only' 13. So I can't tell them." - David 13

"Because all grown-ups are judgmental and just generally a pain." - Max 15

"Because my parents don't know I'm playing the game where it happened. They might get angry that I was playing it without asking." - Larisa 12

What would you want a grown-up to say or do if someone were mean to you online?

"To listen to my feelings and say, like, it's okay to get sad sort of. If it had happened a lot I'd want their help to make it stop." - Petter 10

"That they would do something about it. But from a distance, otherwise it just gets worse. Even if you grown-ups don't always see it that way." - Sigrid 12

"I would want them to listen to me and to believe me. And really take it seriously. Many grown-ups just belittle things like that and don't think it's all that bad." - Ornella 14

Tip: Dare to ask questions

Some adults feel insecure about how to talk to their children about their online lives. But you know what, all you need to do is show some interest and curiosity. Ask if you can sit with your child so that they can show and teach you. You might ask questions like: Why don't you show me how this works? What do you spend most your time doing online? What's the most fun? Have you ever had a bad experience online? How did that work out and what did you do?

Many kids and teens say that it can be difficult to talk to grown-ups about what happens online. As an adult, you have to show that you really want to listen and understand and that you will be there for support if your child needs it. Remember, never judge or blame your child, even if he or she has been involved in things that concern you.



No. 1 attack!

SEXUAL HARASSMENT ONLINE

“He kept sending me dirty pictures despite my repeated attempts to make him stop, and when I told him no he and his friends called me a filthy whore.” - Ester 15

*“Many of my friends have received **dick pics**, it happens all the time. It’s super common. I just don’t understand it.” - Elin 14*

“This guy I really liked sent me a dick pic. That made me not like him anymore. Gross!” - Vilda 13

*“I’m a girl who’s 13 years old. About a month ago I **added** someone I knew who it was on **snapchat**, but after the second pic he started asking if I could send naked pics. I said no but he kept asking and finally I **blocked** him, but he kept creating new accounts. I didn’t want to tell anybody because I’m afraid no one will believe me. What shall I do? This grosses me out, plus I see him in school every day.” - Saga 13*

“I received my first dick pic when I was 12, I didn’t ask for it.” - George 14

“Someone in my class has messaged me on Instagram that he thinks I’m pretty, asking for pictures of me and apparently thinks that I should send him naked pictures. He also messaged my best friend and asked if she has fingered/jerked herself off.”

- Ellen 14

The internet is amazing, but sometimes things show up that are not so amazing. Unwanted sexual questions, propositions and pictures belong to that category. It's become routine that some boys send pictures of their penis to girls, but also to other boys. It's for different reasons: to freak out and exercise power, but also because they think people will like it. Girls and boys can certainly send each other pictures out of curiosity, lust and free will, but it's an illegal act to send sexual pictures, or expose your genitalia, to another person against their will. Sexual harassment online also includes unwanted propositions, detailed sexual questions or requests for naked pictures.

Tip: Practice how to take a stand

Just like adults, children react differently when difficult things happen in life. Some children might get very disturbed by unwanted sexual questions and dick pics, whereas others just shrug their shoulders and delete the image. All feelings are allowed. Prepare your child by talking about all the things that may happen online. Together, you can come up with strategies for how to react in a situation that doesn't feel right. As a preventive measure, it's also important to talk about what's okay to send others and what's not. And what pictures that are okay to receive and what pictures that are not.

Practice how to take a stand. In case your child were to be exposed to something, but also in case your child were to see others become victims of, for example, sexual harassment. To practice how to say no and take a stand is to take care of yourself, to set boundaries and respect your own feeling when something doesn't feel right.

It's important to know that even if your child has their own strategies, you as an adult are still responsible for determining if your child is in need of more support or protection. The younger the child, the more support it may need.

Should something happen to your child, talk to them about what happened. Make sure you secure evidence by taking **screen shots**. You can also file a police report by calling the police on 114 14.

“...that made me not like him anymore. Gross!”

Facts

It's illegal to send sexual pictures or expose your genitalia to another person against their will. The crime is called sexual molestation.

GROOMING - AND BEING ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SEX

"One day he started asking really weird questions. About my body and stuff. I don't even know why I replied but he kept asking so many questions. After we chatted I told my sibling what happened who said I should block him because he was a pedophile. Then I told my parents and mom thought that I shouldn't answer his questions. Dad found out his account and reported him." - Amanda 12

"I was getting creepy messages on snap and blocked right away. I want to tell my mom because I'm still scared and I want to report it because my friends are also getting messages from the same guy." - Patricio 11

"I wasn't really into chatting about sex and stuff like that but when I was chatting with him my loneliness and depressive thoughts went away. I didn't know then that what we were doing was a punishable offense for him, I know that now. But it still feels like my fault because I never said stop, feels like I'm the one who should be ashamed. I still feel bad and ashamed about it, even though it was a long time ago." - Astrid 16

"It felt good in the moment, with tons of comments about how sexy I was, what a beautiful body I had, etc. But after came the feeling of disgust." - Julia 17

*"I really don't know what to do, the thing is I sent pics of me in a bra to this guy I know and now that I've said I don't want to send anything more he wrote that he's saved all the pics and that he's going to leak them on **insta** and **tag all** my friends so that they'll see them too."* - Emilia 14

"I'm worried about my friend who's chatting with older guys online. How can I make her understand that it's dangerous?" - Tuva 16

*"No, nothing bad has ever happened to me since I'm being careful and always **check** if I know the person before I click on any link or anything like that."* - Simon 12

"Today a guy wrote me that 'I'm going to find you and rape you if you don't send me pussy pics'. He lives not far away from me. I'm so scared." - Signe 17

It happens sometimes **online** that kids and teens get asked questions about sex. It can be questions about what they look like or what sexual experiences they have. But scary as it may seem, it can be comforting to know that in most cases, kids and teens have their own strategies for avoiding sexual advances from adults. For example by blocking, reporting, and getting help from a grown-up or a friend. Very few children actually get harmed.

The greatest fear of many parents is that other adults will contact their children online for the purpose of having sex. For an adult to contact children for sexual purposes is a criminal act called grooming. **Grooming** has always been around, but the internet has enabled perpetrators to take action in a whole new way. Today, they can seek out potential victims online and contact them through **chats** or **social media**. There, it's easy to approach children while the perpetrator can remain more or less anonymous. Grooming can happen fast or take place over an extended period of time. The perpetrators can pretend to be other children and talk in a way that makes the victim feel a sense of connection and trust.

It's important to be present in your child's online life. Make your child trust that you will always be there for them no matter what has happened. It's never your child's fault.

Tip: Don't judge

A good, respectful relationship between parent and child is the best foundation for the child to want to – and dare – to come to you if something doesn't feel right. Show that you care and that you are interested in your child's thoughts and experiences. That makes it easier for your child to come to you for support and help, and easier for you to ask about what's going on online. Talk to your child about different strategies that can be used if they're contacted by an unknown person. Reinforce the notion that it's always okay to block or **shut people** down if anything feels at all creepy or wrong. Let them know that making threats are a way for perpetrators to stress children out and pressure them into sending sexual pictures and videos. Talk about what grooming is, how it might happen, and the fact that grooming is about adults consciously trying to persuade and trick children in order to get what they want.

If you suspect that your child has fallen victim to a crime – dare to ask about what has happened. Sometimes telling can be difficult, and it's important to give the child the time and space they need to tell you when they are ready. As an adult, you need to show that you are available. Perhaps you need to ask several times for the child to dare start telling. Don't judge your child, even if you get worried or angry about what has happened. The most important thing is how your child feels and what they need in order to feel better. We know it can be difficult to remain calm when you're worried about your child, but try to. For victimised children to be able to tell someone about what happened is the most successful strategy for their continued well-being, according to experts.

Talking to your child about questions about sex online:

- You decide which pictures you want to send or not. You always have the right to say that you don't want to send a picture if it doesn't feel right. Once it's sent, you can't change your mind.
- Be aware that people you meet online may be someone different from who they claim to be. Trust your gut feeling if something feels weird.
- It's easier to stand your ground when you use so called "stop words", like "I decide what pictures to send" or "What you ask is not okay, I'm going to block you, bye."
- If the person you're in touch with starts to pressure or threaten you – don't reply, just leave and break off contact. It's never okay to make threats. Talk to a grown-up about what happened as soon as possible.
- Remember, you didn't do anything wrong– and you can get help.
- Online conversations should always feel fair, you're the one who's in charge.

If you suspect that a child is a victim of a crime you need to contact the police. On www.polisen.se you'll find information about sex crimes against minors. You can file a police report by calling 114 14 or give the police tips about websites, aliases or user names that concern you via email: itbrott.desk.noa@polisen.se





THE FILTER EFFECT - WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT IS FAKE?

"Almost all my friends use Facetune to edit their pics before posting on Instagram. I'm trying to find natural light to be a natural beauty." - Olivia 14

"You can't compare yourself to someone professional. It's about angles." - Aiwa 15

"When you're online you can highlight your best qualities. You can be who you always dreamt to be. You can be better looking than you really are. You can pretend to be someone else."

- Linnéa 13

"I have some serious inferior complex about my body. I've started blocking anyone on Instagram who makes me think about how I look, and started to follow people who are body positive instead. This has made me realise that everything I was thinking before is bullshit." - Ebba 13

"Of course I get jealous when someone else posts nice photos. That makes me feel bad that mine aren't nice. Even though I think their photos are nice. I want to be famous and good looking on instagram. Because it seems like fun." - Jack 10

"I don't know if I want to keep my instagram. On the one hand, I think it's important to be on instagram since almost everyone in my generation are and I think in the future it will be just as obvious as being on facebook. But I don't like that the system is all about external validation, I feel awful every time I post an image but I have to do it to keep up with the times and social media." - Julius 16

"I'm not going to post a photo where I look ugly. Those photos aren't nice. I want nice photos on instagram. Most people only show their good sides." - Maya 10

"It's hard to know what guys want. They only care about looks. But I'm not just an image on Instagram." - Mia 14

"I really don't think everyone on insta looks the same. For me insta is just fun." - Agnes 15

*"I'm on **instagram** and **pinterest** for inspiration. I want people to post nice pictures. If you get upset or feel bad about it, then just stop **following**. Everyone knows that a picture doesn't tell the whole truth."* - Klara 14

How are the seemingly “perfect” facades on the internet affecting your child? Beauty ideals are nothing new, they’ve been around since mankind learned how to create images. But there’s no question that the **online culture** has brought looks even more into focus. It’s easy to start comparing yourself to others or feel that you should be or look a certain way.

Today, **influencers**, **bloggers** and **youtubers** often set the standard for how we’re expected to look or be. Many make a conscious choice about what to show and how to show it. We rarely get to see the ordinary grey Tuesday morning, or how much work that’s really behind a seemingly spontaneous **selfie**. Some YouTubers spend a lot of time in front of the mirror to get that perfect “morning look” before they record a fabulous good morning video. This can create a sense of stress and insufficiency.

Luckily, many young people get it. Most kids and teens see beneath the surface and understand that there’s another life behind all the pretty facades. Also, there are many influencers with sound values – role models who talk about the real life behind all the perfect imagery and how they too can get fed up with what seems insincere and fake.

Tip: Talk about role models

Talk to your child about their online life. Ask what kind of pictures and videos your child likes to post, and what others are posting about themselves and their lives. Talk about how both kids and grown-ups can get affected by other people's social media **feeds**. What online content might be a source of strength for your child? What's it like for your child to follow different people, what feels good or maybe not so good? Any other, more positive role models that they can follow and get inspired by?

Many influencers online are sponsored and get paid to promote fashion and make-up. People are shown in their best light, pictures are **filtered** and carefully selected to present our very best moments. That could be a good topic for conversation, in case your child feels the pressure to live up to certain ideals. Is there anything your child is watching that's causing stress or a sense of being insufficient?

Many kids and teens have a clear idea about what they choose to post online, and they are also well aware that much of what's being posted on social media has been filtered. Encourage your child to find empowering role models online and practice critical thinking when looking at pictures.

EPIC



GAMING AND ESPORTS - MORE THAN JUST GAMES

"I don't have a ton of friends close by that I can hang out with, but in my games I do." - Abdullah 12

"I saw a scammer on Steam, so I reported him for scamming and blocked him." - Aron 13

"The attitude to women is real bad. If a girl joins the game the comments start pretty much right away. And if you tell people to back off you might just get attacked yourself." - Tom 17

"I play this regular game online. I've met many nice friends there. The problem is that I'm afraid to ask my parents if I can talk to them on Skype." - Fadi 12

"In games they often harass me for being a girl, I have to do everything perfect." - Lara 15

**”Jag mötte en kille
i ett onlinespel som
såg att jag betedde
mig annorlunda än
vanligt och frågade
hur det var. Sedan
dess har vi umgåtts,
och det är tack vare
honom som jag lever
än idag.”**

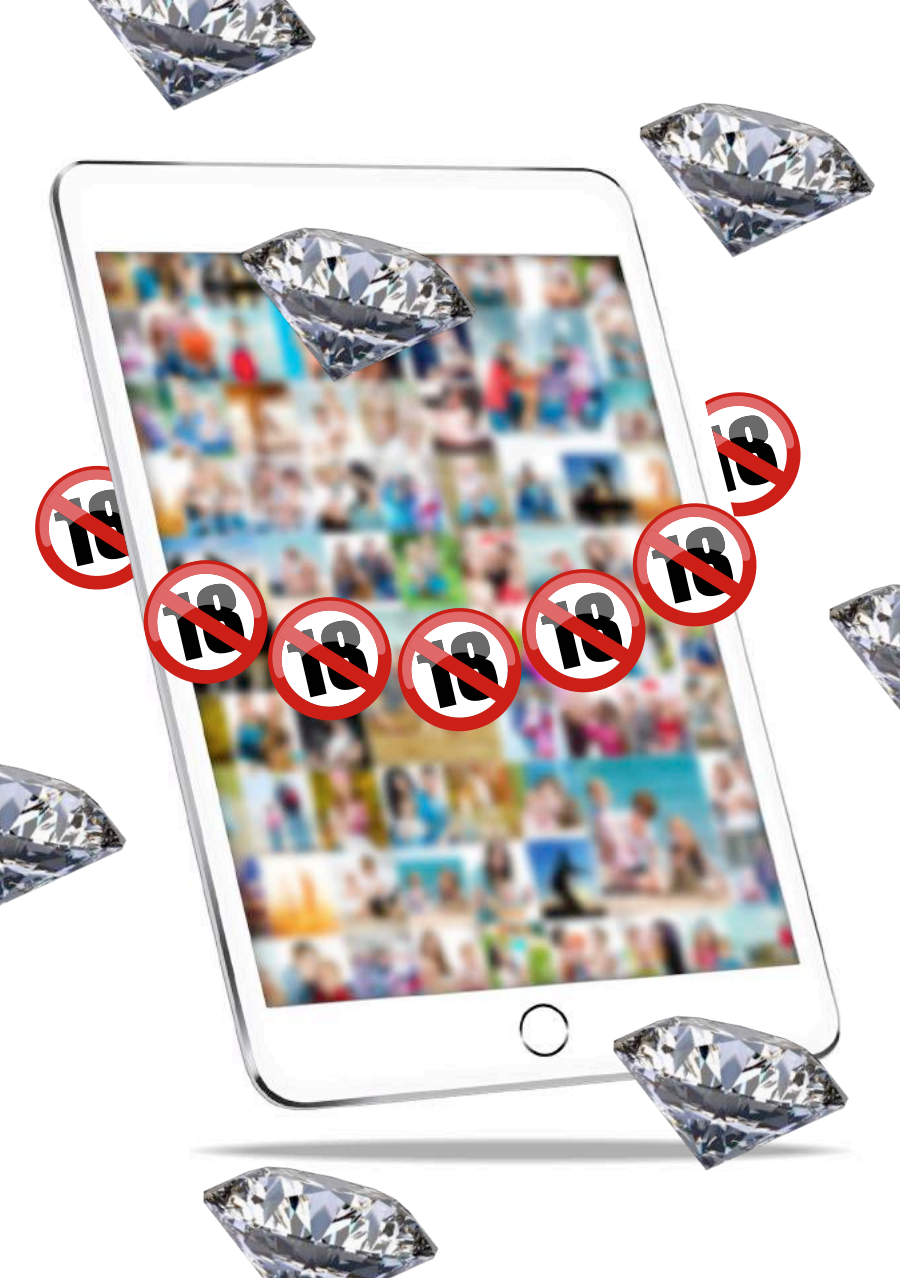
Today, **gaming** is a common way for many kids to hang out with their friends. Especially boys, but more and more girls also play. Instead of meeting in person, many kids now get together around a game **online**. Global **esports** is a multibillion SEK industry and one of the fastest growing job markets right now. For a select few, it's a full time job, but for most people it's a hobby, a way to find new friends or simply pass time. In any event, many see gaming as a much needed escape from reality and a way to meet like-minded people.

Major **gaming profiles** have many followers in their **social channels**. Some of them take on a social responsibility and talk about, for example, mental health. That creates an open and supportive forum for fans to write each other about difficult issues. But, just like anything else, it's good to be aware of the less positive aspects of gaming. The jargon can sometimes be tough and male chauvinistic, locker room style, and that kind of language can affect the way we view the people around us.

Tip: Become your child's "Player 2"

Getting involved in your child's gaming is a good thing, and also something that kids often want you to. The good thing about games is that they can often be played together. Ask if you can be a part of it, if your child can show you, and if you can play too. Grab a console and sit down next to your child. It probably won't be long before your child starts to vividly explain what you're doing wrong and how you can do it better. You become a part of the gaming world, which also makes it easier to ask questions in a relaxed and engaged way, without judging or accusing.

Ask your child if they have ever felt uncomfortable in a game. What was it that happened and how did your child choose to act? Together, you can come up with new strategies to handle difficult situations that may arise in the gaming world.



CONTENT THAT MIGHT BE DISTURBING

"I have the same AppleID as my parents. We trust you, they say, but I like that they know what's going on. So I don't do anything illegal." - Elvira 11

"As soon as I feel uncomfortable I tell my parents. In the app Viber sometimes ads with naked girls pop up. I know how to block and report. My dad is good with technology." - Ferhat 11

"A guy I was playing a game with sent sick videos to me with people being killed or their heads cut off or animals being tortured." - Ludvig 12

"When I see scary things I think – is this real? Are there people out there doing this kind of stuff?" - Ali 10

"When I was going to use one of the school's iPads, someone had started a porn video. I thought it was gross and told my teacher." - Alex 12

For both children and adults, surfing the web means you might come across pictures or videos that make you feel uncomfortable. YouTubers who are normally harmless and entertaining can sometimes use inappropriate expressions that get picked up and go viral. Many kids and teens get uncomfortable when exposed to realistic content like animal cruelty and violence. It's important that you listen and take your child's concerns seriously. And just as important, also ask your child about the things online that are supportive and make them feel good about themselves.

What is it that your child likes the most about the internet? Where are people hanging out, what's the most fun? Is there room for your child to be his or herself? Does your child have friends online that are supportive and fair? If something doesn't feel right, what would your child do? Does your child feel that you as a parent are present and supportive?

Tip: Don't project your worries onto your child

If your child has been through something uncomfortable, ask if they can share it with you. Take your time and try to remain calm. Listen to your child's experience and thoughts about what happened. Once you've listened, share your thoughts. If you are concerned, don't project your worry onto your child, but explain what it is that you are concerned about. Together, you can talk about what kind of support your child needs right now and what course of action you should take. Is there something that needs to be done: block, confront or report? Children have lots of strategies for avoiding uncomfortable things online, many little tricks that can help in different situations. There are also many websites with information, advice and tips that can be of support for both you and your child, such as Ungdomsmottagningen (public youth health clinics), BRIS (Children's Rights in Society) and the Prince Carl Philip and Princess Sofia's Foundation.

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CYBERBULLYING - RUMOURS AND PEOPLE BEING MEAN

*"Someone wrote on **social media** that I was disgusting and ugly and things like that. What I did was I reported and **blocked** him, so life goes on, but it left a wound in my heart."* - Samira 12

*"My friends created a **Snapchat** account and used it to post ugly pics of me that were taken behind my back. They wrote to people in our school pretending to be me. They did it behind my back but after a while I found out and when I brought it up they said it was just a joke."* - Ida 13

*"I was angry with my sister so I went through her phone and saw that people are writing mean and offensive stuff to her. I told her that I support her through everything and then she told me all the things they had said and done and they're only doing it online because they're too scared to do it **face to face**."* - Jens 14

"I told my parents and since we knew who did it we could tell her parents and stop it." - Emelie 11

*“Some people in my class were calling other people whores, idiots and other things. No one in the class **chat** reacted to all this hate. I had enough and told them to stop when it happened in the chat. Then they turned on me and I wasn't allowed in the class chat anymore. In the classroom the day after, they were whispering and pointing fingers and no one wanted to sit next to me anymore.”* - Nicolina 17

*“A girl was angry with me because I had been with her brother and she didn't know about it. The girl started a rumour about me which made me receive hundreds of messages about this, so much hate that I couldn't be on **Instagram** for like three days. This was in early summer 2017 and I still get hate messages from people about this.”* - Ella 15

“I was photographed and insulted by another student at our school, then I told my parents about it and they contacted the teacher who contacted the girl who was taking pictures and her parents.” - Alva 14

One thing about the internet that worry both adults and children is the risk that the children will be exposed to demeaning comments. These days, bullying **online** is often connected to bullying in school. Bullying and abuse are also more common on anonymous platforms than on platforms where you can't be anonymous. But even if online bullies are often anonymous, most children still know who's behind it. It's often other children in the same age that they already have a relation to.

Social media platforms are designed to promote social interaction between people, but can sometimes have the opposite effect. **Private accounts** or **chat groups** can create an even stronger sense of alienation for those who aren't invited.

Peer pressure online works in the same way as peer pressure in general. It's easier to join than to resist. For fear of becoming the victim oneself, children often pick a side or jump on the bandwagon about something that's being written, even if they think it feels wrong. It's also easier to "get even" online. Therefore, online conflicts run the risk of escalating and turning big. At the same time, the internet also makes it easier to join forces and say no if something doesn't feel right.

Tip: Be supportive no matter what happened

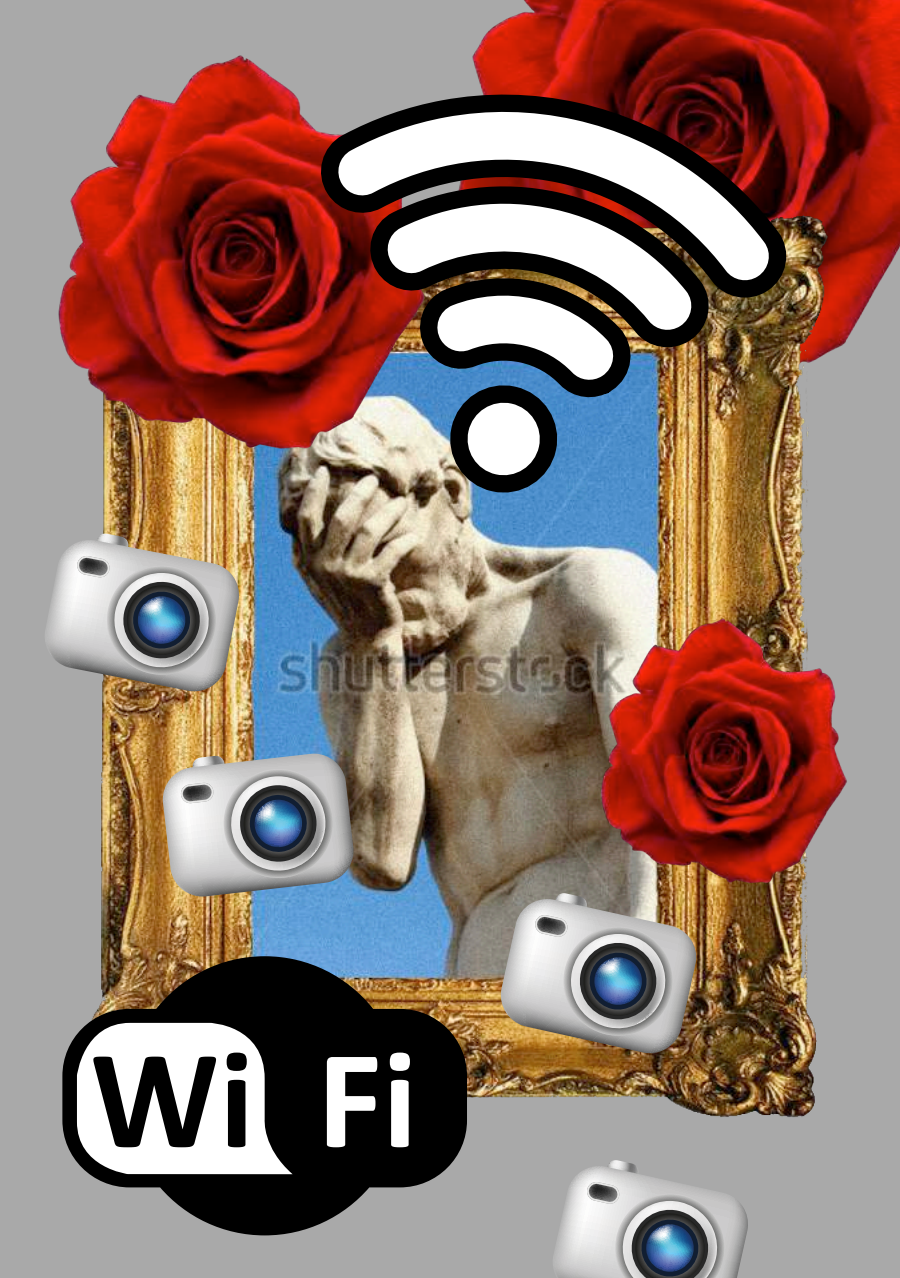
Talk to your child about what has happened. What strategies did your child use? What kind of support does your child need? Remember, your child has a right to be supported whether they've been a victim, a bully or remained passive.

The most common strategy among kids is to talk to an adult at home. Few kids would talk to an adult in school. But for you as a parent, it's good to know that schools have an obligation to investigate and act on any abuse or harassment from student to student, even if it happens online. Schools also have a responsibility to take measures to prevent online bullying. As a parent, don't hesitate to tell the school about what your child has been a victim of, or participated in, and rally their support.

How can your child avoid taking part in something mean? When kids and teens pep and support each other, the internet becomes a nicer place. Your child can choose NOT to spread rumours and NOT to forward a mean picture. When it comes to peer pressure, you as a parent play an important role in strengthening your child's self-esteem so that they dare stand up for themselves. Taking help from grown-ups or friends can be a way for children to pluck up courage.

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PICTURES THAT NEVER GO AWAY

*"I was at a party over the summer and got really drunk, a guy I know filmed it and posted it on **Instagram**. A lot of people saw the video and kept forwarding it. In **comments** and private messages people wrote extremely degrading things about me."* - Smilla 16

*"I would never **post** photos of me undressed in any way. It's too extreme."* - Sean 10

"I can post a pic if I feel down. But why would I?" - Petrus 10

*"I had posted a picture of me, mom and grandma demonstrating on May 1st. Underneath I had written a pretty long and political text. The first days were cool, I was mostly getting love for the picture. But then, in just a few minutes, the hate came rolling in. I found out that the picture had been posted on some extreme right wing **Facebook group**. I can deal with people's opinions but when comments like "die you fucking whore" started coming, I couldn't take it anymore. I felt like shit but I didn't want to delete the picture because I didn't want the hate to win."* - Lisa 14

"I'm trying not to post pics that are too braggy, like, look I'm on vacation. Those types of pics are often fake. I feel like I'm bragging." - Dimitris 10

"Naked pictures are all about external validation. The people I know who posted naked pictures felt super guilty afterward."

- Jenny 14

"It's totally okay for my parents to post pictures of me. It makes me proud and happy." - Amelia 11

Our private lives are becoming more and more digital. So where do we draw the line about what we can share? When people of all ages share everything from dinner choices to mental health, your child is faced with a dilemma: what is okay to share on the internet? The truth is, there is no simple answer. What you or your child feel is okay is highly individual. You can't control everything your children are posting. What you can do, however, is to become a part of your children's online lives.

Tip: Be a good role model

All parents want to post pictures of their cute children, whom they love so much and are so proud of. Posting is an act of love and most of the time the children also seem to think so. But as a parent, it's important to be a good role model. For example, you can apply the basic rule to always ask your child before posting a picture of them – out of respect for their integrity, but also as a way to start a conversation. A soft conversation about what pictures are okay to post, but also about the picture itself, about why you want to post it.

Ask your child if it's okay for you to follow their accounts and keep an open dialogue about what pictures your child is posting. About what's okay and what's not okay. Use role models on social media as a basis for your discussion.



ENTERING THE KIDS' ONLINE WORLD

You don't have to spend a lot of time on **social media** to find discussions where adults behave terribly and post nasty **comments** about each other. There's name calling to the left, threats to the right and in between an onslaught of mean comments. If you can see these discussions, so can your child. The responsibility to create a respectful climate online isn't just on kids and teens, but on everyone who's on the internet.

- Ask what strategies your child is using and encourage the good ones.
- Be curious and present in a respectful way.
- Make yourself available and give your child time to show and tell.
- Listen carefully and take your child's feelings seriously.
- Don't judge!
- If you're concerned: explain what you're concerned about and why
- You don't need to have all the answers or solutions.
- Your child might not be ready to talk when you want to talk. You may have to ask and initiate conversations multiple times. Don't give up.

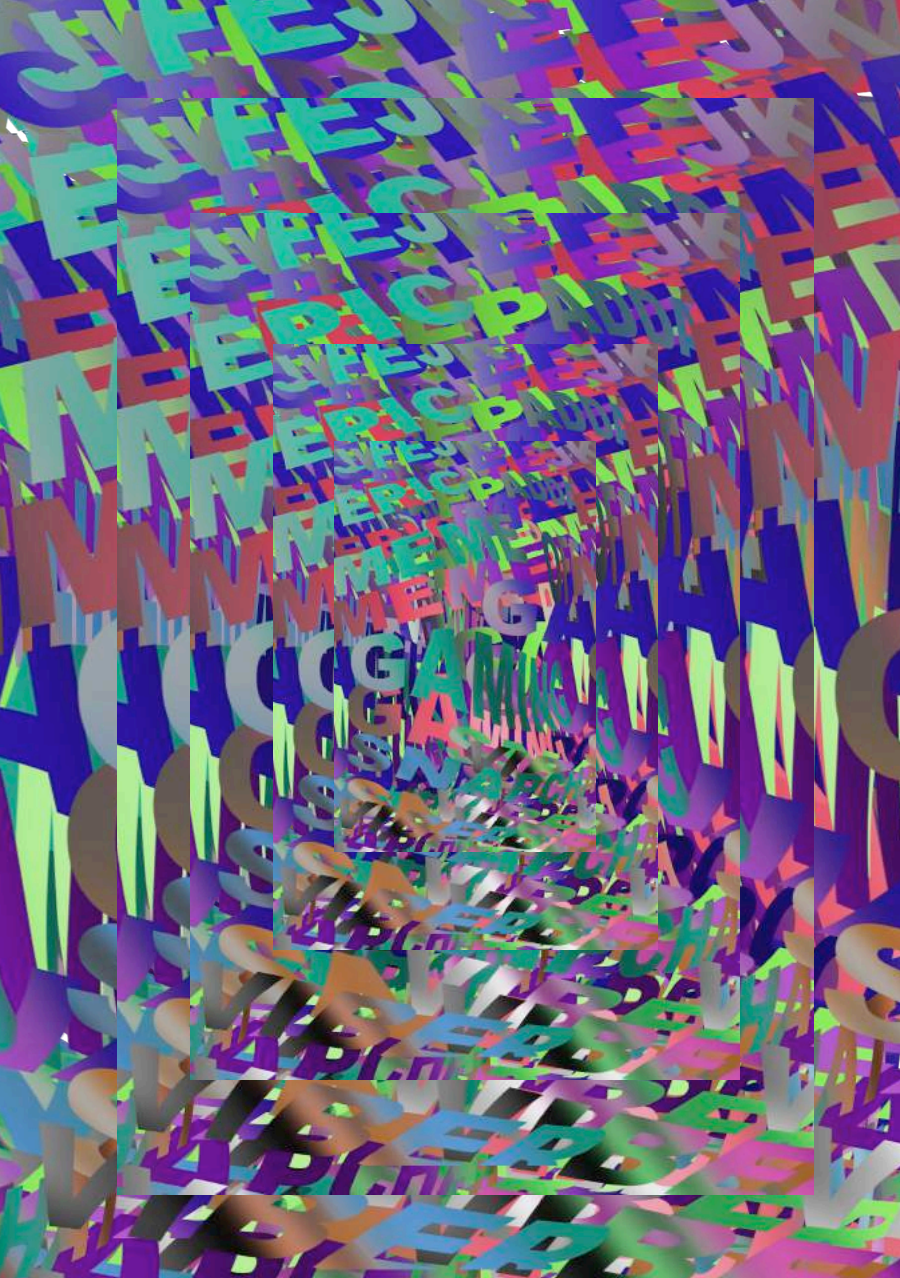
Important to know

For kids and teens, the internet is about everyday relations. Online and offline are connected. What happens offline is something you talk about online and what happens online affects life offline. In the same way, there's a connection between vulnerability online and offline. The risk of getting into trouble online is greater for children who have experienced abuse and mental health issues before, and who don't have any protective, well-functioning adults around them. When you're abused, someone is crossing your boundary. That boundary gets pushed or destroyed. This makes it easier for that boundary to be crossed again, which increases the risk that the child will be abused online.

However, the internet can also be strong source of support for children who feel down, lonely or alienated. Online, they can look for support and contact other children in similar situations or with similar interests. The internet is a place to make friends, get support and feel empowered.

When life gets tough

Focus on your child's immediate needs. Don't act too fast. Talk to and rally support from other adults around you. If you feel you don't know what to do or that you're not enough as a parent, you can always call and talk to a curator at the BRIS hotline for parents: 077 150 50 50. More information can be found on the websites of, for example, Swedish Media Council (Statens medieråd), Safe Surfing (Surfa Lugnt), BRIS and the Prince Carl Philip and Princess Sofia's Foundation.



**DICTIONARY
- WHAT DOES IT
ALL REALLY
MEAN?**

Dictionary - what does it all really mean?

A

Added - *When you've approved a friend request or request to follow and start following each other on social media.*

App - *Software for a smart phone or tablet. Some apps simply open a specific website, others are full scale computer programs. App is short for application.*

Apple ID - *A personal account used to gain access to Apple's services, for example App Store, iTunes Store, iCloud, iMessage, Apple Online Store, FaceTime et cetera. It includes security and online payment information.*

Aww - *Cute*

B

Bae - *Darling/honey/baby*

Baila - *Swedish slang for "to bail", abandoning someone or something.*

Block - *Restricting someone from access to a certain part of the internet, for example one's social media channels.*

Blog - *A web page with personal comments in a journal format, often with links to other websites. A person who blogs is called a blogger ("bloggare" in Swedish).*

C

Catfish - *Pretending to be someone else. A Catfish can post other people's pictures and false information on social media in order to catch someone's attention.*

Chatta - *Swedish for "to chat", communicating with someone online via text, pictures and/or video. Many social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have a chat function. You can also create closed chat groups for friends or classmates.*

Clip - *A short video snippet.*

Cloud - *"Molnet" in Swedish. Servers (hard drives) on the internet that you can access from any location and many different devices (phone, tablet, computer).*

Commentary field - *The part of social media where users can comment on pictures or videos posted by other people.*

Cringe - *Something cringe worthy/embarrassing/lame.*

Crush - *To be secretly in love or like someone from a distance*

D

Dabba - *Swedish for "dabbing, to dab", a dance-like move bending one arm, while the other is fully extended parallel to the first arm, with the face turned towards the bent elbow.*

Dampa - Swedish slang, means to get angry and annoyed with someone.

Dickpick - A close-up of a penis sent from one person to one or more other people.

Dissa - Swedish slang for "dissing, to dis", to ignore or disrespect someone.

Duckface - When someone is pouting their lips for a photograph.

E

Emoji - A mood image or icon used in text messages to express an emotion, attitude or reaction. The word emoji is a composite of Japanese "e" for image and "moji" for sign..

Enoja - Swedish slang, means to use an emoji to make sure you don't come off as rude.

E-sport - Organised computer and video game competitions.

F

Face to face - When you see someone in real life, face to face.

Facetune - A photo editing app used to edit and filter photos.

Facebook - The most known and popular social network. Facebook allows external parties to publish software, games and surveys on the platform.

Facebook group - An open or closed group in which members can share content on a specific topic.

Facerape - To log into and hijack someone else's Facebook account and write inappropriate things.

Fail - Swedish slang for either "to fail" or for something bad.

Fake account - An account on social media that isn't real.

Flasha - Swedish slang for when someone is bragging or showing something particularly nice, picture or object.

Feed - "Flöde" in Swedish. Your home wall in social media where you see the latest posts from the people you follow.

Filtered images - Editing or manipulating one's images, or only posting images from certain aspects of one's life while omitting others.

FOMO - Fear of missing out

Friendzone - Showing that you are just friends and no more than that.

Follow - "Följa" in Swedish. On social media, you automatically follow the people you are become friends with. You don't have to know the person.

Dictionary - what does it all really mean?

G

Gaming - *Playing computer/video games.*

Gaming profiles - *Influencers within the gaming world.*

Gibba - *Swedish slang: to play computer/video games.*

Grooming - *A criminal act. Contacting a child for sexual purposes, where the crime can be described as preparation for sexual assault and molestation of a child.*

Group chat - *A chat with more than two participants.*

Groupie - *A selfie with more than one person in it.*

H

Hashtag - *When you put the # sign in front of a word, you create a hashtag.*

Hashtagging - *To mark a word with a # sign, thereby making it searchable.*

Hype - *Pumped up expectations, for example at the launch of a game, music or fashion.*

I

Influencer - *Working as an influencer means that you influence your followers – for example when it comes to fashion, beauty, technology, lifestyle, health, food, games, sports, culture or anything else. The term replaces words like “blogger”, “youtuber”, “instagrammer”. Influencer is a profession, just like carpenter, TV show host or nurse.*

Instagram - *A photo sharing and publishing app, also a social network. In Swedish often called “insta”.*

Internet friends – *“Internetkompisar” in Swedish. Friends that you hang out with online, in chats and commentary fields, in games or on social media.*

IRL - *In real life, Things that happen in the physical world as opposed to the virtual/digital world.*

J

Joina - *Swedish slang for “to join”*

K

Keff - *Swedish slang for something bad, to make a fool of oneself.*

L

LAN/LAN-party - When gamers get together to connect their computers and play in a Local Area Network (LAN). Dreamhack is a well-known LAN.

Like - "Lajka" in Swedish, to like someone's post, comment, or text, by clicking the like/thumbs up icon.

Link - "Länk" in Swedish, a clickable shortcut to another webpage on the internet.

Lägga ut - Swedish for posting, to upload and publish text, pictures or videos online.

M

Meme - A meme (pronounced meem) is an online phenomena consisting of a an image, gif (short animation) or video with (often witty) captions. Memes spread virally from one person to another.

Molnet - see Cloud.

N

Naw - Oh, so cute.

Net, Internet - The world's largest computer network. Technically, a number of networks connected by computer units called routers.

Noob - Beginner (short for newbie).

O

On Fleek - Something perfect, for example looks.

Online culture - Also called net culture, internet culture or cyber culture. The culture stemming from computer networks for communication, entertainment and business.

Online - Being connected to a phone, computer or server through the internet.

Online game - A computer game where players connect to each other through the internet or a local computer network called LAN (Local Area Network).

Offline - Without any contact with other computers or servers on the internet. The physical world.

P

Patcha, patching - When a game developer launches a software update to a game.

Pinterest - A website and social network that works like a digital message board where people can post inspirational images.

Dictionary - what does it all really mean?

Player 2 - If a game is designed to be played by more than one person (multiplayer game), the second player is called "Player 2". The players collaborate and the objective is to help the main character (Player 1).

Pod - A published sound recording, similar to a radio show, that can be downloaded to phones, music players or computers. It can be content that has been broadcast on the radio, or content that is only published as pod radio.

Poddare - Swedish for podcaster: someone who broadcasts pod radio

Post - A content contribution on social media is called a post. As a verb, you post an image Instagram, for example.

Prank - A prank or practical joke that more physical than verbal in nature

Private account - Social media accounts closed to the public. For access, you need to be invited or have your request approved.

S

Scammer - A person who lies or pressures in order to scam people of valuable information or things (credit card info, passport numbers, etc). Scamming is common in the gaming world.

Screenshot - A saved photo of whatever is being displayed on a phone, tablet or computer screen at any given time.

Selfie - To take a picture of yourself.

Share - To forward, re-post or otherwise share someone else's content on social media.

Shut down - "Stänga ner" in Swedish, to remove or block a person you don't want having access to your social channels.

Skype - A free internet phone service, also with video calls.

Smiley - A simple image or icon in a text message expressing an emotion, attitude or reaction. The most basic smileys are comprised of characters from a regular text keyboard, for example :-) for smile, ;-) for wink, :(for sad.

Snapchat - An app that allows people to send pictures that are deleted a few seconds after they are viewed. The pictures are taken with the cell phone camera. Text and simple drawings/doodles/filters can be added. The picture can then be sent to one or more users of Snapchat.

Snap, Snapping - Through the Snapchat app, you snap pictures to others, and you snapchat in chat groups.

Social channels - Social media platforms where individuals can create their own channel and broadcast text, pictures and video.

Social media - Online services for users to create personal profiles and connect, communicate and exchange information. The users provide the majority or much of the content. Virtual worlds can also be considered social networks.

Spridning - Swedish for "proliferation", when online content is being widely seen and forwarded between different users and channels.

Steam - A gaming platform that offers computer games via the internet. Steam is a so called content delivery system for the digital distribution of computer games.

Story - A short term post on Instagram or Snapchat that is being published for a short time before it self-deletes.

Surf, surfing - An umbrella term for anything you do when you have access to the internet.

Swipa - A touch screen interface allowing users to browse content by swiping their finger across the screen. Originally from the dating app Tinder: swipe left for yes or swipe right for no.

T

Tagga - Swedish for "tagging", a way to highlight and tie someone else to a particular post, for example the people who appear in an image on Instagram. Friends also often tag each other to content they like.

Therese Lindgren - One of the leading youtubers and influencers in Sweden. She mixes personal posts about her everyday life with an animal rights engagement and videos about beauty products.

V

Viber - An app for smartphones offering chat services for text and voice communication.

Vlog - Video blog. Like a blog, but publishing video content instead of text and still images.

Y

Yas - A way of saying you like something.

YouTube - A website that allows users to upload and publish videos for free. YouTube contains millions of video clips posted by users, for anyone to see.

YouTuber - A person with a major channel on YouTube. Some YouTubers have a special niche, others have a more general approach.

Dictionary - what does it all really mean?

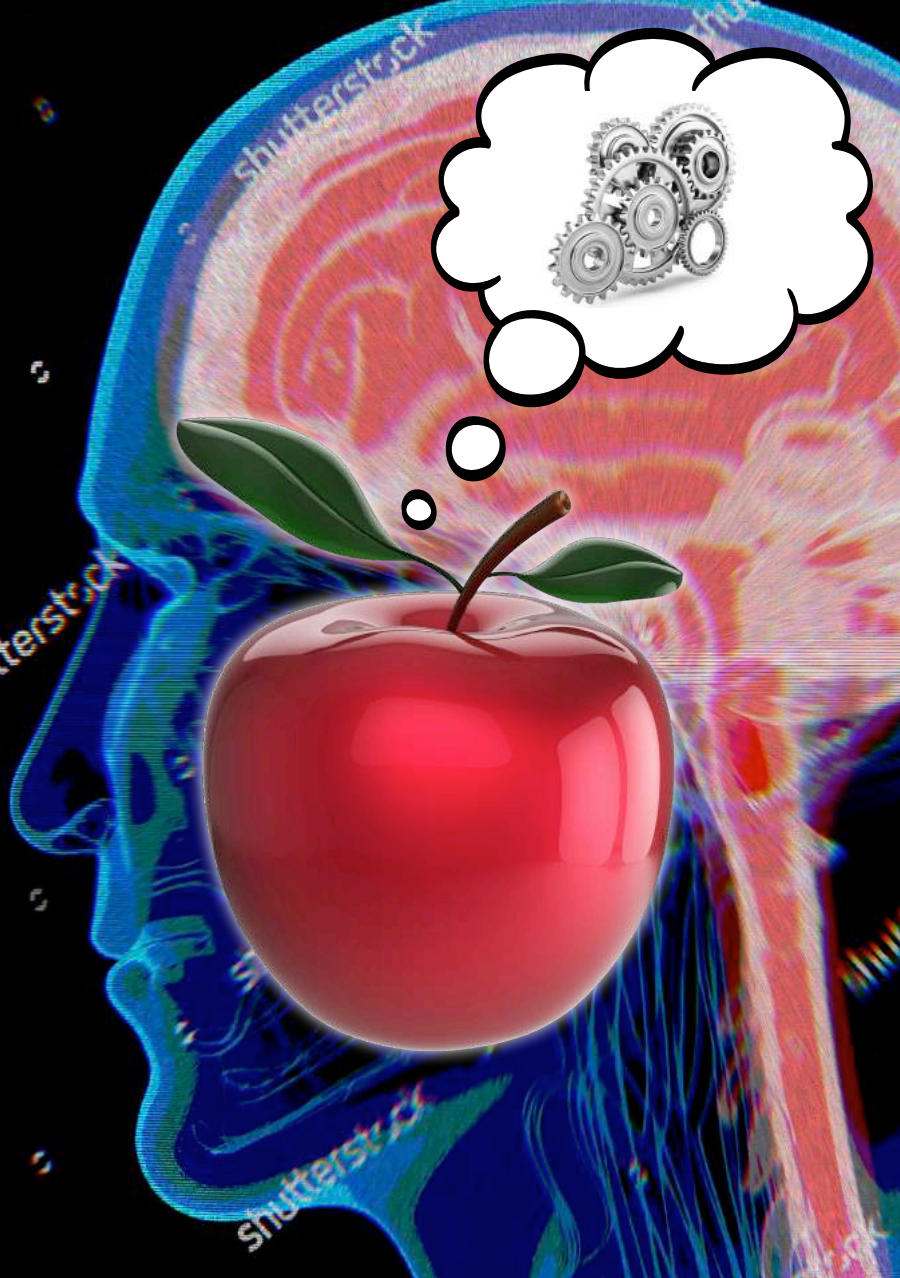
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**Here you can learn more about the online
lives of kids and teens:**

bris.se

prinsparetsstiftelse.se

statensmedierad.se

surfalugnt.se

umo.se

iis.se

A warm thank you :)

To the Marcus and Amalia Wallenberg Foundation, Gålöstiftelsen foundation, and the participating schools Milstensskolan in Täby and Sätterskolan in Sättra, as well as Wieselgrensskolan in Helsingborg and Internationella Engelska Skolan in Landskrona for your contributions to this important book.

STIFTELSEN
MARCUS OCH AMALIA
WALLENBERGS
MINNESFOND



GÅLÖSTIFTELSEN

The purpose of this guide is to help start a conversation between you and your child about their online lives. On these pages, kids and teens share their online experiences, along with tips and advice from youth counselors. So that you can have a better understanding of what life online is like for your child. After that, all you need to do is start talking: about what's fun, great and empowering out there, but also about what may feel a bit tough, tricky and hard. Just like life in general. Your child needs you and your parenting – also online.

"If my parents had asked me what's going on online I would have told them. It would be fun because then they would understand what I'm doing." - Ante 11