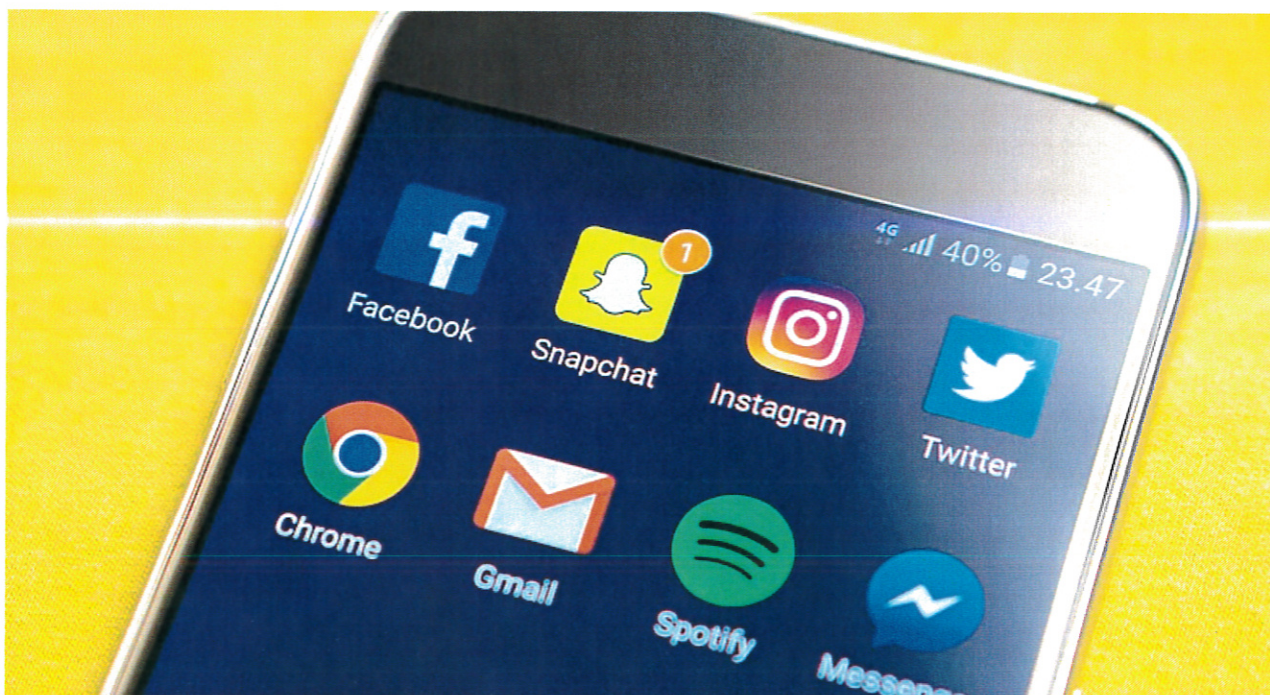# Parents: 7 Apps You Should Know

April 2, 2019 | Suren Ramasubbu, CEO, Mobicip.com

EDITORS NOTE:
While we believe no app is inherently "good" or "bad" (it's how they are used!), one thing we've learned is this... Parents want to know what apps kids are using and what the potential for danger is on those apps. So we turned to our friends at Mobicip for a rundown on 7 apps you should know...
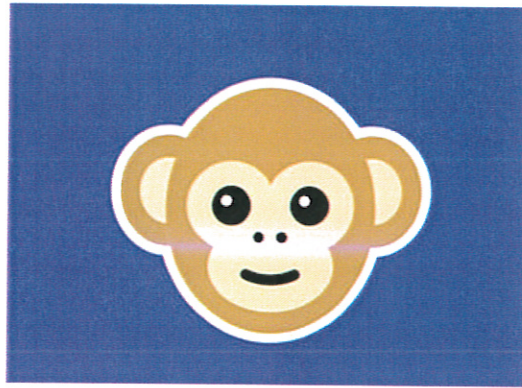

It is a tricky world out there, especially for parents trying to ensure that their children do not fall prey to online abuse and fake news. While it might be futile to try and tame the big bad wolf that is the world wide web, there are a few things you can do to protect your teens from exposing themselves to online dangers. One of these things is knowing about the apps they might be downloading and using, like these:

1. Yubo

This app, popularly known as the 'tinder for teens', comes with a 'discover' section for teenagers who are looking to make new friends. In most cases, when apps make tall claims that their software is 'strictly' for children, it is a piece of cake to bypass the age-gate. For example, in the Yubo app it is pretty easy for any very young child or adult to create an account as a 14-year-old, making the age-gate effectively useless. In addition, Yubo also requires location permissions. Just an added risk, for no real reason? In any case, any app that says 'adults strictly not allowed' needs no place in your children's phones!

2. Monkey

In this app, users can select common interests and have video discussions with strangers. Once such a user with similar interests is identified, a 15-second video chat is started immediately. For children who, by and large, have poor impulse control, the pressure to get everything out in 15 seconds might prompt them into revealing personal information. The topic of discussion can be anything from 'parents' to 'politics'. Like Yubo, Monkey also requires geolocation permission to be granted. Again, setting the absurdly dangerous nature of the app aside, why does this application need the user's location for having a discussion?

3. Holla

Although this app is rated 17+ on the App Store and the Play Store, it is, once again, relatively simple to bypass the age-gate. Similar to Monkey, Holla allows users to video chat with strangers about common interests. For an application that 'promotes' video interaction and collaboration, we find it baffling that the in-app purchases allow users to choose the sex of the person they want to chat with. According to its terms and conditions, Holla has the right to

review and remove any content which is found to be inappropriate. However, the terms also have a clause which mentions that Holla does not review all the content!

4. Blendr

Blendr is similar to Tinder and uses the same 'swipe right' methodology to pair users. The only difference is that Blendr is used more for hook-ups while Tinder is (supposed to be) used for relationships. Blendr also gives users a feed of potential matches which users can browse through and 'swipe right' if they like a profile. When someone signs up with the app, the minimum age, by default, starts with 18. However, there is no way in which Blendr can verify whether the information entered is true. As a word of caution, we also suggest uninstalling Tinder from your children's phones if they have it. Neither Tinder nor Blendr is age-appropriate for teens and that's something that should be spoken about openly.
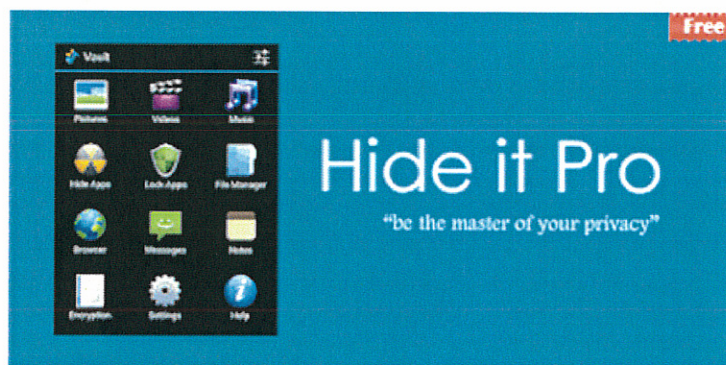
5. After School

After School is an app which aimed to be a school's digitized message board. However, students can post messages and content anonymously on the platform. The nature of the content being shared is often that of misguided revenge in the form of leaking naked images of classmates, cyberbullying, and sharing private information of others without consent, or 'doxing'. The app is said to have fixed their interface with live monitors to ensure that the content is clean, but parents have still reported finding nudes and porn in their children's feed.

6. Kik

 Kik is an anonymous chatting app which allows users to join public and private chat groups based on similar interests. (fyi... David Eisenhauer, 18, was sentenced to 50 years in prison for murdering 13-year-old Nicole Lovell— they met through this app.) Shockingly, even the groups that are marked 'strictly teen' are rife with messages asking for nudes! There are also groups full of adults who are willing to pay for nudes, as well. The risks of this app far outweigh the benefits!

7. Hide It Pro

Of all the apps listed here, the most harmful one has to be 'Hide It Pro'. It allows users to disguise their more risqué apps as boring and harmless apps like calculators and alarm clocks. A secret pin or fingerprint unlocks access to the real app. Parents looking to keep an eye on their children's online activities might not even know what their kids are using! The only way to get around this is for them to open up themselves.

Parents – this article is not designed to scare you into becoming paranoid or to transform you into sleuths who are always on top of everything their children do. We believe at Mobicip that forewarned is forearmed, when it comes to keeping your children safe online.

Truth be told, these apps are just the tip of the iceberg. You also need to stay aware of internet trends like the 'Tide Pod Challenge' and the 'MOMO Challenge'. Keep an eye on your children's online activity, either manually or with the help of app blocking software like Mobicip. With your work cut out for you, it always helps to talk to fellow parents and understand what tools they use to ensure that their children are safe from the world wide web!

Author:

Suren, the co-founder and CEO of Mobicip, and a passionate advocate for mobile learning and Internet safety. Suren speaks or hosts panels at conferences and seminars on these topics for parents and educators. He also serves as a consultant for educational technology projects in K-12 schools and school districts.

Keep in touch with the latest on parenting, technology and education. Subscribe to the Mobicip newsletter. Learn more at www.mobicip.com.

Tags: mobicip   apps   yubo   monkey   holla   blendr   after school app   kik   hide it pro