

Is Social Networking Changing Childhood?

A National Poll



To ensure that America's youth have the knowledge, skills, and ethics they need to harness the power and the potential of this increasingly digital world, we must:

Educate

Create tools and curricula that teach young people how to be media savvy and safe, search for age-appropriate content, and be careful and ethical with regard to their own digital conduct.

Empower

Give parents and teachers the tools and information they need to raise kids to be responsible and respectful digital citizens.

Protect

Define a healthy balance between safe and smart digital media practices for kids and families and other important societal rights.

Common Sense Media conducted a survey to examine how social networks are affecting kids and families. The results? Kids increasingly connect with friends, classmates, and people with similar interests through social networks, and often far outside their parents' awareness.

The results of the poll illustrate a continuing disconnect between parents and kids when it comes to kids' digital lives. In today's society, there is more technology and less time for parents to supervise their kids' actions and behaviors on Facebook, MySpace, or in any other digital environment. Communication and socialization in our kids' world is increasingly moving from face-to-face to face-to-cyberspace. Families need to keep up regular conversations about life in the digital world and what it means to be a safe, smart digital citizen – including ethical behavior, privacy, bullying, and reputation management.

Key findings

Social networking sites have become a major part of teens' daily interactions.

- Over half of all teens (51%) check these sites more than once a day.
- Almost a quarter (22%) check more than 10 times a day.

Parents have a lot to learn when it comes to their children's behaviors online, especially how big a part of their lives social networking has become:

- Just 4% say their children check social networking sites more than 10 times a day (22% of teens do).
- 23% of parents say their children check more than once a day (51% do).
- 12% of teens with Facebook or MySpace pages admit that their parents don't even know about the account.
- Just 16% of parents think their child has shared information they would not normally share in public (28% have).

What teens do online – and what parents know about it

Have you / your child ever done this online?	Teens %	Parents %
Complain about or make fun of your teachers	54	2
Post something you later regretted	39	2
Make fun of other students	37	1
Share personal information about yourself that you would not normally share in public	28	1
Create a profile for yourself with a different or false identity	25	1
Pretend to be someone else online	26	1
Pretend to be an adult while chatting with someone online	18	
Post false information or lies about other people	16	
Sign onto someone else's social networking account or profile using their password, without them knowing	24	