Fact sheet

Live streaming

ⓘ This fact sheet includes information for parents and carers about live streaming.

What is live streaming?

Live streaming is the **transmission or receiving of real time media, usually audio visual**, over the internet.

How does it work?

Live streaming is popular with young people because they allow them to generate content which can be broadcast to a global audience.

Live stream creators need a **device with a web camera or camera and a microphone** to stream live content. This can include a **mobile phone**, **laptop** or **tablet**.

Live stream viewers can **watch and make comments using any device** that is connected to the internet

A live stream can allow for **comments from other users or viewers to be made in real time**, which can be responded to directly by the broadcaster.

There are specific apps purposely built to live stream and many social networking apps now have an in-built livestream function.

Live streaming can take place on the following platforms:

- **Live streaming platforms** A user will live stream themselves in real time doing an activity or answering questions (playing video games is popular). Audience members can chat to them in real time for a response, subscribe and even donate money.
- **Social media** This allows a live stream direct to a user's followers/friends on their accounts, or the general public – depending on the platform and privacy settings.

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Examples of popular live streaming functions include Facebook Live, Instagram Live, Twitch and House Party.

What are the challenges?

Live streaming can be **improvised, unpredictable and in real time**, there is less control over what your child might come across.

Live streaming **may not allow for moderation or filtering**, meaning that young people may see things that are inappropriate or that they weren't expecting to see, or be subject to inappropriate comments from other users.

Young people need to be aware of their environment if they decide to live stream. **Background imagery, noises and other factors may give away a lot of personal information**.

There is also the **risk of losing control of content** which can be copied, stored or shared by other users.

Media over live stream **can be recorded and saved**, if a viewer decides to screen record or screenshot the content, sometimes without permission.

Tips for staying safe

- **Maintain supervision** of your child when they are watching live streams, or engaging in live streaming themselves.
- Encourage your child to **not disclose personal information** and consider the environment of live streams, particularly if they are live streaming to the public.

- Encourage your child to **think critically about the type of content** they are sharing, as some content can be saved, shared and stored.
- Learn how to **block**, **report and remove users** in the case of inappropriate or unwanted contact.
- Remind your child it is **okay to say no and stop live streaming** if something makes them uncomfortable.

Getting help

Online child sexual exploitation, including **grooming** and **extortion**, can be reported to the **Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation** (accce.gov.au).

The **ThinkUKnow website** (thinkuknow.org.au) has information and resources to prevent online child sexual exploitation as well as how to report and get help.

If a child is in immediate danger, call 000.

If you become aware of explicit content that has been posted online, including child sexual abuse material, report the site to the **eSafety Commissioner** (esafety.gov.au). They have a range of powers to take action to have content removed.

Kids Helpline (kidshelpline.com.au) is a free, confidential telephone and online counselling service for young people between 5 and 25 years old.