

KEEPING YOUR KIDS SAFE ONLINE: A PARENT'S GUIDE

The Digital World: A Double-Edged Sword

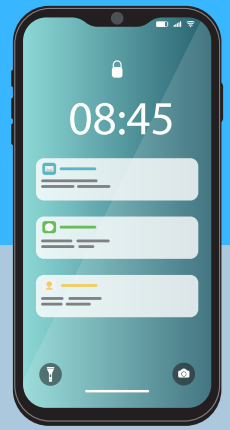
The internet offers incredible opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. But it also presents real dangers. As a parent, it's crucial to understand these risks and equip your children with the knowledge and skills to navigate the online world safely.

Key Online Safety Concerns:

- **Cyber bullying:** Online harassment, threats, and intimidation can have devastating emotional and social impacts.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Children may encounter age-inappropriate material, including explicit images, violence, and hate speech.
- **Online Predators:** Adults may attempt to groom children online for sexual exploitation.
- **Data Privacy:** Children's personal information can be misused or shared without their consent.
- **Screen Time Addiction:** Excessive screen time can negatively impact physical and mental health, including sleep, attention, and social development.



What parents can do



What Parents Can Do:

- **Open Communication:** Talk openly and regularly with your children about their online activities.
 - Ask questions, listen actively, and create a safe space for them to share their concerns.
- **Set Clear Rules and Boundaries:**
 - Establish clear rules about screen time limits, appropriate online behaviour, and website access.
 - Use parental control tools to monitor and restrict online activity.
- **Teach Online Safety Skills:**
 - Educate your children about online safety best practices, such as:
 - **Strong passwords:** Encourage unique and complex passwords.
 - **Privacy settings:** Help them understand and adjust privacy settings on social media and other platforms.
 - **Critical thinking:** Teach them to critically evaluate information found online and be wary of scams and misinformation.
 - **Reporting abuse:** Show them how to report cyber bullying, harassment, and inappropriate content.
- **Lead by Example:** Model responsible online behaviour yourself.
 - Limit your own screen time and be mindful of your online presence.

KEY FEATURES OF PARENTAL CONTROL APPS



Screen Time Management:

- Setting daily limits.
- Scheduling downtime.
- Blocking access during specific hours.

Website and App Filtering:

- Blocking inappropriate content.
- Restricting access to specific websites or apps



Location Tracking:

- Real-time location monitoring.
- Geofencing (setting virtual boundaries and receiving alerts).

Activity Monitoring:

- Viewing app usage.
- Monitoring browsing history.

Communication Monitoring:

- Monitoring text messages and call logs (availability varies by app and operating system).

Popular Parental Control Apps



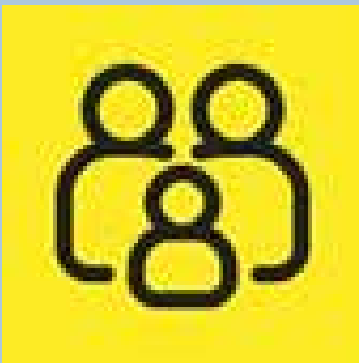
Qustodio:

- Offers comprehensive monitoring, including web filtering, app blocking, and location tracking and provides detailed activity reports.



Net Nanny:

- Known for its strong web filtering capabilities. Includes screen time management and location tracking features.



Norton Family:

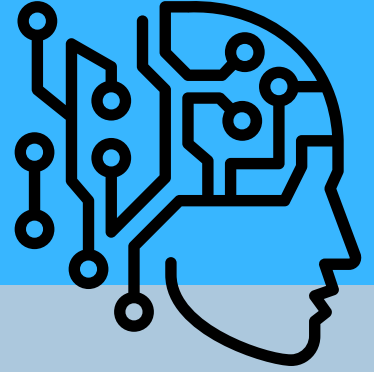
- Provides robust monitoring and filtering tools. Offers features like location supervision and search monitoring and is good for families with multiple devices.

Google Family Link:

- A free option for Android devices which allows parents to set screen time limits, manage app downloads, and track location.



Artificial Intelligence and Deep Fakes



- **What are Deepfakes?**

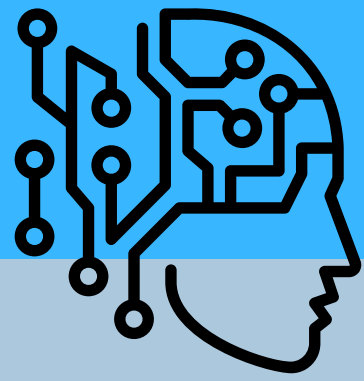
- Deepfakes are AI-generated manipulations of videos, audio, or images, making it appear as though someone is saying or doing something they never did.
- They utilise deep learning technology to create highly realistic forgeries.

- **The Dangers:**

- Misinformation: Deepfakes can spread false information, manipulate public opinion, and damage reputations.
- Fraud: They can be used to create fake endorsements, impersonate individuals for financial gain, or conduct sophisticated scams.
- Emotional Harm: Deepfakes can be used to create non-consensual pornography or to humiliate and harass individuals.



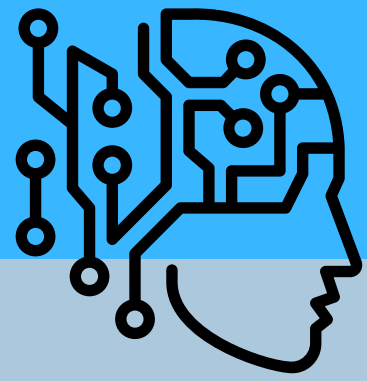
Catfishing enhanced by AI



- **Traditional Catfishing:**
 - Catfishing involves creating a fake online identity to deceive someone, often for romantic or financial purposes.
- **AI's Impact:**
 - AI makes catfishing more convincing. Scammers can use AI to generate realistic profile pictures, create believable online personas, and even generate fake voice and video interactions.
 - This makes it much harder to distinguish between real and fake online identities.
- **Increased Risk:**
 - AI-powered catfishing can lead to significant emotional and financial harm for victims.



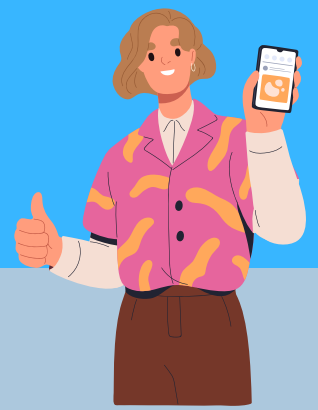
Protecting yourself and your Children



- **Be Skeptical:**
 - Don't believe everything you see or hear online. Be especially wary of content that seems too good to be true.
- **Verify Information:**
 - Check the source of information and look for corroborating evidence.
- **Look for Red Flags:**
 - Be aware of signs of deepfakes, such as unnatural facial movements, inconsistencies in audio or video, and a lack of blinking.
 - When dealing with online relationships, be wary of people that refuse to meet in person, or that have very inconsistent stories.
- **Protect Personal Information:**
 - Be cautious about sharing personal information online, as it can be used to create deepfakes or fake identities.
- **Educate Children:**
 - Teach children about the dangers of deepfakes and catfishing, and encourage them to be cautious about online interactions.



Key Advice for Children



- **Protect Your Personal Information:**

- "Never give out your full name, address, phone number, school name, or any other personal details to someone you don't know online."
- Explain why this information is valuable and how it could be misused.
- "Be careful about sharing photos or videos that reveal where you live or go to school."

- **Think Before You Click and Share:**

- "Not everything you see online is true. Always think carefully before you click on links or share information."
- "Once something is online, it can be very difficult to remove. So, think twice before posting anything."

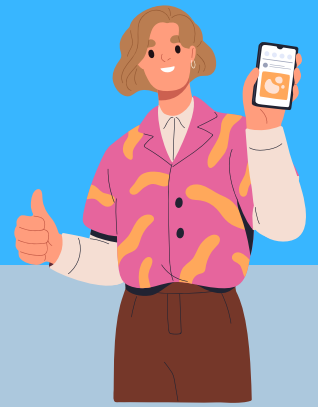
- **Talk to a Trusted Adult:**

- "If anything online makes you feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused, tell a parent, carer, teacher, or another trusted adult right away."
- "It's okay to ask for help. We're here to support you."
- "If someone online asks you to keep a secret from your parents, that is a big red flag, and you should tell a trusted adult immediately."

- **Be Kind Online:**

- "Just like in real life, be respectful and kind to others online. Cyberbullying is hurtful and wrong."
- "If you see someone being cyberbullied, do not join in, and if possible tell a trusted adult."

Key Advice for Children



- **Be Aware of Strangers:**
 - "People online are not always who they say they are. Never agree to meet someone you've only met online without a parent or carer's permission."
 - "Do not accept friend requests from people you do not know."
- **Remember: Online safety is an ongoing conversation.**
 - Regularly review and update your rules and boundaries as your children grow and their online activities evolve.
 - Most importantly, build a strong and trusting relationship with your children. This is the foundation for open communication and effective guidance in the digital world.

For more information and support, visit:

- **NSPCC:** <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/How-can-CEOP-help-me-YP/>
- **Childline:** <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>