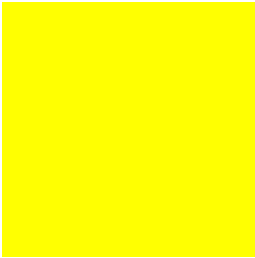




3 apps parents should know about

1. Yubo (Formally Yellow)



Content

Social networking app Yubo has recently rebranded, having previously been known as Yellow. Children and young people can upload a profile picture and up to five more photos, and choose to connect with boys, girls or both sexes, write personal information about themselves, and use emojis. Yubo has 15m users, 70% of which are between 13 and 17 years old.

How old?

Users need to be at least 13 years old to sign up for the app and require parental permission. Once they've done so, 13-17 year-olds should only be able to connect with people within their own age category. An 18+ version of the app also exists but age verification processes were introduced to prevent users falsifying their age.

Contact

The nature of the app means users will be connecting with other teens they haven't met, living within local or international areas. Users can look through a series of profiles and swipe left or right to either like or dislike another person's profile. Once two people have both liked each other's profiles and become friends, they can message each other, as well as make live streaming videos.

Things to be aware of

Yellow was previously nicknamed 'Tinder for teens' and considered a 'teen dating' app. Its developer says it has responded with new safety and security measures, to prevent inappropriate content such as sexting. Even so, it is advisable to talk to your child about what is and isn't appropriate to share. Users can report others on the app by clicking the flag icon in the top left-hand corner of the profile that they want to report, while Yubo says it now has human moderators, support teams and algorithmic activity monitors.



3 apps parents should know about

2. Monkey



Content

Monkey is a chat app where people are randomly connected with other Snapchat users from around the world within their age range and have an initial 10-second video chat. If someone wants to continue the conversation, they can tap the 'time' button to keep chatting. If both people in the conversation tap 'time' then the call will continue. After the conversation, they can add each other to Snapchat.

How old?

This app is rated as 13+ but there is no age verification required.

Contact

Young people will make video contact with strangers and be able to communicate with them for 10 seconds or longer depending on whether there is a mutual decision to carry on chatting (by tapping 'time'). If they continue to chat then they will be able to add each other to Snapchat or Instagram.

Things to be aware of

Just 10 seconds is very little time to get to know someone before deciding whether you want to continue chatting. The speed of response also risks users giving away more information than they would choose to if they had the chance to think about it.

Young people need to be aware that the person they are communicating with is a stranger so they shouldn't disclose too much personal information. With no robust age verification in place, users could enter any age they want, pretending to be younger than they are.



3 apps parents should know about

Monkey has recently come under fire as there have been incidents of adults trying to communicate with teens and indecent images being shared. Monkey does state a zero-tolerance policy for misuse of the app and say they have moderators 24/7.

Click on the following link for safety instructions if you want to report any safeguarding issues from the app. <https://monkey.cool/safety>

3. Musical.ly



Tip:

The best way to get an idea of what your teenager could be getting up to on these apps is to download them yourself, have a browse and see what you find. You can always delete the app again afterwards.

Content

Young people can record their own songs or video themselves miming along to music. They can edit the videos by speeding up or slowing them down. The videos can then be posted to their followers and shared elsewhere, for example on Facebook or WhatsApp.

How old?

The terms and conditions of the app state that it is not suitable for young people under the age of 13 and that users should be 18 years of age. However, many younger teens are using it.

It is worth considering that there is the possibility of swearing and users dressing in what adults may consider an inappropriately sexual way in some videos.

Contact

Many young people enjoy using this app to express their creativity to other music lovers, watch videos from other users and connect with their friends. Young people can create an account by using an email address or through their Facebook or Twitter account. The videos are open to comments and young people can follow each other, like and comment on videos. They can add hashtags when posting and search for trending hashtags too.



3 apps parents should know about

Things to be aware of

Any app where users can 'live stream' videos can be risky as it isn't possible to moderate the content that is being viewed live. Users can block other users if they receive any nasty comments. They just need to select the icon with three dots on the right-hand corner of the profile page of the user they want to block and select 'block this user'. They can also report any abuse by selecting the appropriate option from the three-dot dropdown menu.

About Parent Zone

Parent Zone is the official parents' representative on the UK Council for Child Internet Safety and chairs the UKCISS Digital Resilience working group. Parent Zone is devoted to providing expert information to families, schools and family professionals. It creates, curates and checks the best available advice and information on all of the issues that are caused or amplified by the internet.

The Digital Schools Mission

Create a digitally resilient school community by working together to keep children safer online, while helping them to enjoy all the benefits of a digital world.

With resources for parents, pupils, staff and governors, plus a help service and initiatives that adapt as new issues emerge, Digital Schools are part of a community that is building the resilience of their students.

Digital Schools Membership has a wealth of parent-facing resources, information and support, plus many other tools to engage the whole school community. For more information, visit <https://parentzone.org.uk/membership/digital-schools-membership> or contact membership@parentzone.org.uk to request a demo.

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