

## 4 Apps That Should be Monitored by Parents

According to Pew Research, over 78% of teens have cell phones with almost half of them having smartphones. According to a recent study, 58% of all teens between the ages of 12-17 have downloaded apps to their personal cell phones. This generation loves to communicate through their cell phones. The movement away from desktops to laptops has become problematic. The rise of sexting, bullying, prostitution, and drug use are taking place over third party mobile apps. Apps have become the new way for teens to engage in at risk behavior without the watchful eyes of their parents. The list below is the hottest apps that are being used by teenagers.

### 1. Snap Chat

#### Why Your Teen Loves It

Snapchat allows users to send images and videos to their friend lists. The secret sauce is that the sender can place a time limit on how long the receiver reviews the image or video. The content or “Snaps” self-destruct from 1-10 seconds based upon the time limit set by the users. After the snap self-destructs it is also deleted from the Snapchat Servers. Teens love snapchat because of its simplicity and speed. It sends photos and videos much faster than standard text messages. Teens send millions of snaps throughout the day of funny facial expressions or pictures of their pets.

#### Why You Should Monitor It

Snapchat is the number one sexting app on the market. Teens send nude snaps to their significant others under the impression that snaps self-destruct. Forensic experts have stated the snaps can easily be recovered thus they are never truly deleted from the receiver’s phone. Due to the countless number of nude snaps, porn sites have popped up over the internet to take advantage of the free content. There have also been numerous cases of bullying with the app.

### 2. Kik Messenger

#### Why Your Teen Loves It

KIK is a super quick instant messaging app with over 100 million users that allow teens to exchange videos, pics, and sketches. New Kik cards allow user send Youtube videos, create memes, and gifs without leaving the app. Kik Cards reached over 2 million users within first week of their launch.



#### Why You Should Monitor It

Teens are using the Kik app for sexting and dating. Teens are sending nude selfies to one another through the app. The term sex buddy is being replaced with Kik Buddy. Teens used Reddit and other forum sites to place classified ads for sex by giving out their Kik usernames. Kik does not offer any parental controls. Additionally, there is no way of authenticating users thus making it easy for pedophiles to use the messenger app.

### 3. The Whisper App

#### Why Your Teen Loves It

Whisper is the Teen Confession App. It allows users to superimpose text over a picture. The secret sauce is that users are anonymous thus allowing for secrets to be posted. Over 70% of whisper users are women under the age of 25. Whisper provides freedom for young users to share raw feelings and emotions over simple pictures.

Be yourself and  
stay anonymous



#### Why You Should Monitor It

Teens have started using the app for cyberbullying. Due to the anonymous feature of the app, teens are posting pics of other teens with derogatory text superimposed on the image. Users do not have to register to use Whisper thus no user profile. Unfortunately, the app allow users to communicate with other users nearby by using the device GPS location settings. Pedophiles seek out female whisper users to establish a relationship. Recently, a Seattle, Washington man was arrested for raping a 12 year old girl that was lured to a hotel through the app.

### 4. Ask.fm App

#### Why Your Teen Loves It

Ask.fm is one of the hottest social networking sites that is almost exclusively used by teenagers and pre-teens. 25% of teens have posted something on ask.fm over the past 30 days. It is a question and answers site that allows user to ask anonymous questions. Ask.Fm has Twitter and Facebook integration that allows users to connect with all their friends on those popular sites.

#### Why You Should Monitor It

Due to intense bullying, Ask.fm has led to 4 documented cases of suicide in the United States, Ireland, and Great Britain. Users engage in hyper bullying by constantly asking inappropriate and derogatory questions. The app is totally anonymous and is not being monitored by the developers.

The key for parents is to monitor downloaded apps on their child's phone or mobile device. Google the apps to learn if they are dangerous or inappropriate. Try to gather all of your child's passwords and user names for monitoring purposes and communicate with your child about why you are monitoring their activity on their mobile device.