

# SURF ONLINE SAFE

INTERNET AWARENESS FOR ALL OF US

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## "HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG"?

PAUL LITHERLAND



**O**ne of the most common questions I get from parents is, "What age should I introduce my kids to social networking?" Quite often this is a difficult question to answer as there are many factors impacting on such a decision.

In the 4 years I have been presenting to primary age students, there's been a massive rise in those on 1 or more of the top 10 social networking apps (Facebook, Instagram, Musical-ly, Snapchat). The argument often arises that they are under age, so should not be on them! Though I do agree in principal with that statement, in practice it is not as simple as that.

Since 2013, I have been gathering information from the primary schools I present to. This is over 100 thousand primary age students (10yrs to 12yrs). The number of year 5 students on these apps has jumped from 15% to 60%. Whilst year 6 students, have jumped from 30% to a massive 80%. Now technically, none of these kids should be using these networks. But they are! As such, many parents are conceding defeat and allowing their kids to use at least 1 social networking app. Is this wrong? Many argue "Yes", whilst many argue "No". So I am sure you will understand why I approach this subject with an appropriate level of understanding and consideration.

You know your kids better than anyone. It would be naive of me to condemn you for saying yes, but also inappropriate for me to promote the use of such sites for anyone under age. If you allow your child to join, discussion must occur regarding the use of the network and every level of caution must be adopted. Strict guidelines must be put in place and regular communication and monitoring is a must. Online footprint and information sharing are subjects that should never be avoided and must be assessed during every visit.

In the USA, The Child Online Protection Act makes it illegal for social media organisations to 'market their sites' towards, or to 'collect the personal information' of persons under the age of 13. So the vast majority of networks are 13+. But as we all know, many kids are joining these networks by changing their age at registration. This is where my frustration starts! Instead of the networks putting appropriate levels of security on their apps to avoid this happening, they have simply handballed that pressure back to us as parents.

If your son or daughter is 12 or under and has joined a network, they would have done so by entering a fake date of birth during registration or by failing to abide by the networks terms and conditions. If you or your child have breached terms and conditions, that is now an out for the owners of that network. We must understand that if our kids are using such networks under the age of 13, they are on their own and will not be protected. The onus of responsibility therefore remains with you and your kids in regard to the use of such sites.

We must truly consider all the aspects in relation to the decision to allow our young kids to join social networking. If you can avoid it, then I would encourage you to continue to avoid it as long as possible. At the end of the day, it is called 'social networking' for a reason. These sites are designed for the sole purpose of spreading information in order to make money. Our young kids find it difficult to consistently assess what are safe and unsafe sharing practices. Therefore it is important as parents we give them a good start in understanding the phenomenon that is social networking. An SOS presentation will help them understand this risk and where their parents are coming from.

Whether users are 10 or 20 years of age, they must use these sites and apps with caution, guidance and understanding. Whether they can do that on their own without your assistance is ultimately your call.

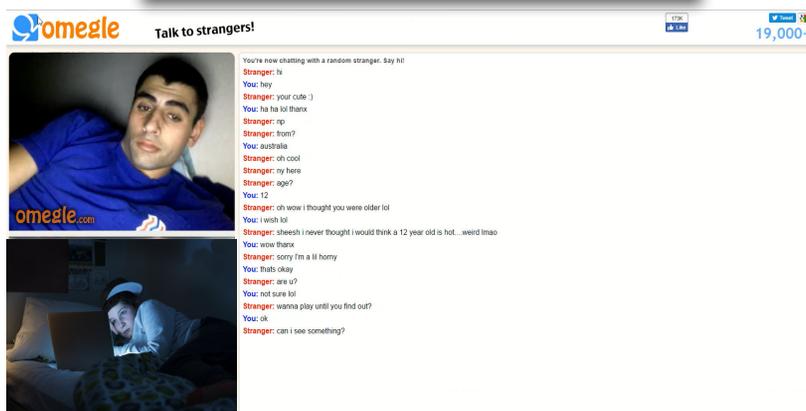
## PRESENTATIONS

VISIT [WWW.SURFONLINESAFE.COM.AU](http://WWW.SURFONLINESAFE.COM.AU) FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PRESENTATIONS

**A** Surf Online Safe presentation is not simply about 'Don't do this or don't do that'. It is so much more than that. Educators and Parents regularly offer great feedback on the impact my presentations have had on their kids. But what I pride myself on the most is the feedback I get from students themselves. They find my presentation style very relatable and funny, whilst still educational. Students themselves are taking direct action on their online habits as a result of an SOS Presentation and they are discussing it with their peers and their parents. For me, this is a great indicator that my message is getting through. This is what I am all about!

Paul Litherland - Owner Surf Online Safe





## THE RISK WITH CAM TO CAM CHATS.

HOW CAN SUCH A SITE STILL BE ALLOWED TO HIDE BEHIND DISCLAIMERS AND LEGAL PRIVILEGE?

**A**s a former WA Police Officer, sites like Omegle, Fring and Chat Roulette were a constant frustration, seemingly hiding behind a disclaimer 'Do not use if you are under 18.' It seems that statement devolves the creators of any responsibility for the protection of their users. Especially if those users are children. Yes, kids should not be on these sites. I agree with that 100%, but does that mean if they are, whatever happens to them is excusable or their own fault?

Omegle, like many others is a simple video chat website where you can interact cam to cam with anyone around the world. And that is exactly how they advertise their site, 'Talk to strangers!!!' Pretty much exactly what parents have said NOT to do since time began. But it is what many of these 'strangers' are doing on the site that has me shaking my head.

I recently visited Omegle for 3 x 30 minute sessions. Using a method adopted by many policing agencies around the globe, I was pretending to be a 12 year old girl. What I saw surprised me and raised more questions than answers. The main question being; How many adult males around the world are happy to sexually exploit a child? It was remarkable how open and free such men were in regard to sexually enticing children and how easy the site allowed it to happen.

For 90 minutes I interacted with 63 men aged from 19 to 50. 51 of them had sexually explicit conversations with this child. 27 were openly performing a sexual act, whilst another 7 were under blankets, clearly doing the same. They took no action to stop when seeing the girl, or being told her age.

39 of the 51 males, openly asked this young girl to remove her clothing, to flash or to enter into similar sexual acts, even though she was clearly a child. Many conversations were manipulative and coercive, solely aimed at taking advantage of a child for sexual gratification. Only 2 of these men left the chat after being advised of the age of the girl, all others continued their behaviour without concern. One man (above left), quoted as saying, "Sheesh, I never thought of a 12 year old as hot." and "are you horny?"

If this was to happen in your local shopping centre, these men would be arrested. So why should the fact that it is online be any different? Because there is nothing in place legally to empower such organisations to monitor their networks for such activity. This needs to change. It is time the creators of such online playgrounds accept more responsibility to safeguard their environments. It is my aim to push that change here and overseas and I hope I can count on your support to make that happen.

## SAFETY TIPS

HOW TO HELP MINIMISE THE RISK OF EXPOSURE TO NETWORK MARKETING

1. Turn off GPS or Location Services when posting online.
2. Avoid showing links to your location (home, school, work).
3. Become familiar with Trackware & Indexing and how they work (see my other publications).
4. Do not post links or usernames of your other networks.
5. Never use the 'Remember my password' button.
6. Open your FB in one Browser, whilst surfing on another.

## SOFTWARE

STUFF TO HELP YOU STAY SANE

- THE FAMILY ZONE** - See article in this publication
- SNAGIT** - A great way to screen capture evidence if your child is being bullied or groomed - <https://www.techsmith.com/>.
- ZULUDESK** - A complete Mobile Device Management system for your school and teachers. For more info visit - <https://zuludesk.com/>

## LINKS

SOME USEFUL ONLINE RESOURCES TO HELP PARENTS & EDUCATORS.

- Your Sphere** - Numerous articles on the digital world : <http://internet-safety.yoursphere.com>
- Cyber Smart** - Govt resource website : Visit - [www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)
- ACORN** - The WA Police reporting gateway for online crime : Visit - [www.acorn.gov.au](http://www.acorn.gov.au).
- eSafety Commission** - A great site full of usable information and resources : Visit - [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

# THE FAMILY ZONE

## THE FUTURE OF ONLINE PROTECTION

I am regularly on the lookout for new initiatives and technologies to help me promote my message of on-line safety. A company that is gaining some great momentum here in Perth and across Australia is Family Zone. I regularly meet and speak with the Family Zone team and I am impressed with the product they have created. A number of local and national organisations do offer good internet management solutions within the home, but Family Zone has worked really hard by going beyond just the basics. They offer truly useable solutions for parents which not only help manage internet use within the home, but also help kids navigate safely and appropriately online, whilst still enjoying interaction with their peers.



Family Zone offers an in home internet security option through hardware (Family Zone Box), as well as a complete mobile system through the use of apps (Family Zone App). With the box, you can monitor and modify the homes internet connection to the devices used by your kids, whilst still maintaining open access to your own devices. Simple to set up, the Family Zone Box can manage access rules and schedule play, school, study and sleep times for all your family's devices. It can even manage guest access. Perhaps the best feature of The Family Zone from my perspective is the options available for the use and restrictions of Social Networking apps! Not only can you place restrictions on the use and downloading of such apps, you can also add restrictions or limit access during certain times of the day and evening. A great tool if you want your kids to do their homework, instead of chatting with their mates on Facebook or Instagram.

This is where the future is heading in regard to parental internet assistance. Parents and schools are looking for complete packaged solutions to help guide children and teens toward appropriate internet use and Family Zone is definitely that. They are reasonably priced and offer multi-level packages to suit your needs. For more information on this product visit - [www.familyzone.com/au/](http://www.familyzone.com/au/).

# Surf Online Safe does not receive payment of any kind from companies endorsed in these publications. If a product offers truly useable options in regard to internet awareness, then I am happy to recommend their services - Paul Litherland, Owner - Surf Online Safe.

## PAUL LITHERLAND

### ABOUT YOUR PRESENTER



Paul was a WA Police Officer for 20 years, working in a diverse range of roles over a decorated career. For the last 5 years, Paul worked within the Technology Crime Investigation Unit. A section internationally recognised as one of the leading technology crime divisions in the world.

During his time at Tech Crime, Paul became increasingly frustrated with the limited resources available to parents, schools and kids in regard to the online world. Paul started presenting to students in his local area and Surf Online Safe was born. 5 years later, he now presents to over 320 schools and organisations across Australia.

For more information about Paul and his work, please visit [www.surfonlinesafe.com.au](http://www.surfonlinesafe.com.au).

## REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

### GOOGLE HAS A GOOD WAY OF SEEING WHAT OF YOURS IS OUT THERE



Want to know how to find your child's images online? Google have a smart little cheat that might help you find some "indexed" images of them.

1. Open Google Search & click on the "images" option.
2. Go to your child's Facebook account & open one of their photo's.
3. Highlight, or "Left Click" the image & "Drag" it to the Google page & hover it over the search bar. Google will then tell you to "Drop Image Here".
4. Drop the photo & Google will then search the entire internet for that image.

After a few seconds, Google will return a list of sites where that image may have been found. If your child has a large online footprint, there is a chance you might find copies of their photo's on other websites. For more information on "Indexing" visit [www.surfonlinesafe.com.au](http://www.surfonlinesafe.com.au) and click on the Blog link to view my "Here we go again" article.

# REPORTING - WHAT CAN BE DONE?

MANY PEOPLE ARE UNAWARE OF WHERE THEY CAN GET HELP OR RESOURCES FOR ONLINE MATTERS

**M** Many people are still unaware what resources are available in Western Australia for the reporting of online matters. The two main areas where we can make a report online about what is happening to us personally or to someone we know, are ACORN and the eSafety Commission.

**ACORN** - The Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network (ACORN) is a national policing initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. It is a national online system that allows the public to securely report instances of cybercrime. It will also provide advice to help people recognise and avoid common types of cybercrime.

ACORN has been designed to make it easier to report cybercrime and help develop a better understanding of the cybercrime affecting Australians. You can report anonymously through ACORN and I would encourage anyone who has experienced any online crime (including Cyber Bullying) to make a report. Please visit - [www.acorn.gov.au](http://www.acorn.gov.au).

**ESAFETY** - With the aim to help guide children and young people toward safe, enjoyable experiences online, the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner hopes to encourage behavioural change – where Australian children and young people act responsibly online – just as they would offline.

Their goal is to create an environment in which cyberbullying is truly unacceptable. To achieve this, they hope to both educate and help prevent harmful online behaviour from occurring in the first place. There are also a large number of resources and a great deal of information for parents and kids on this website, so I would encourage you to sit down with your kids and have a walk through this great resource. Please visit - [www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au).

**ACORN**  
Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network



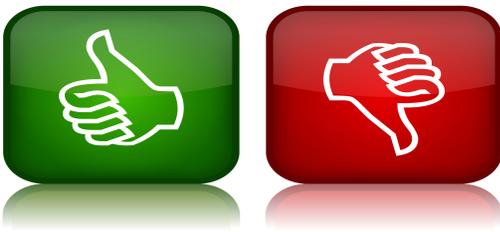
## eSafety issues

There are some real risks that you need to be aware of when you're online. Safeguard yourself and your friends by understanding the issues and knowing how to respond.



## FEEDBACK

PLEASE LET ME KNOW WHERE I CAN GET BETTER



**I** I am always eager for feedback from those who have seen my internet awareness presentations, so I may improve my content to keep up with the concerns of parents & educators.

If there is some way I can improve, then I would love to hear from you, your school or your children. At the end of the day, my ultimate goal is keep our kids safe online & I hope you can help me achieve that.

Please contact me to offer feedback.

Email - [paul.litherland@surfonlinesafe.com.au](mailto:paul.litherland@surfonlinesafe.com.au)

Facebook - [www.facebook.com/SurfOnlineSafe](http://www.facebook.com/SurfOnlineSafe)

Blog - [www.surfonlinesafe.com.au/blog\\_post\\_latest.html](http://www.surfonlinesafe.com.au/blog_post_latest.html)

Youtube - Surf Online Safe : SOS

## ROUTER SETTINGS

A RELIABLE OPTION TO MAXIMISE CONTROL OVER THE INTERNET IN YOUR HOME



**A** A simple & effective way to restrict internet access to your child's devices in the home is through your modem or router. Many modern units have extensive capabilities to alter settings to devices that access the internet in the home. For between \$150 to \$250, you can purchase a quality modem that will allow you numerous restriction settings.

As an example, internet access to your teen's phone may be restricted after a certain time at the click of a mouse, whilst a parent's device can still access the internet without restriction. Many also offer parental control settings directly through the modem. Any decent computer store can point you in the right direction for such a unit.