



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

# The **DOOR** that's not **Locked.**®

## Safety and the Internet:

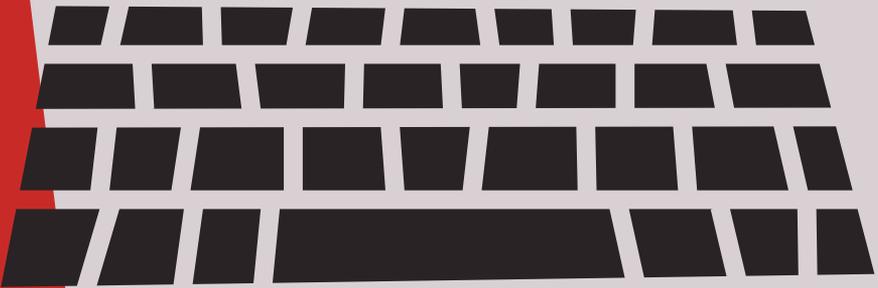
A Guide for Parents  
of Children 13 to 15  
Years of Age



[thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)

The Internet can offer incredible possibilities for youth — as long as teens and parents are aware of the risks. In growing a better understanding of the online world, you can in turn empower your teen with skills to help her/him engage with technology in a safe and responsible way.

Monitoring teens' online activities can present a unique set of challenges. At this age, adolescents are seeking more independence and spending more time socializing with friends. This brochure is intended to help parents gain a better understanding of the risks their children may be facing online and how to keep them safer. It includes information about: the common online interests of teens 13 to 15 years of age; considerations around their safety; and strategies to help parents empower their teens with skills that can protect them from the risks they may encounter while online.



# ALL WEB. NO NET.®



Technology plays a central role in the lives of teens. It has changed the way they socialize and interact with others. The Internet provides teens with access to an unlimited amount of information, some of which can be informative and educational and some of which can be harmful. Teens require ongoing reminders about the caution that needs to be taken when using the Internet. The following three tips will help parents lay the foundation when it comes to their child's online safety.

- ✎ **Pay attention to what is going on in your teen's life.** Know how your teen is spending her/his time. If your teen appears to be out of sorts, let her/him know that you notice and that you are available to listen if s/he would like to talk. Your child may be reluctant to share what is going on, but it is important to keep the lines of communication open so s/he knows you are emotionally available if s/he needs you.
- ✎ **Discuss the public nature of the Internet.** Remind your teen that care needs to be taken when sharing information/pictures/videos as they can be easily misused by others. Also discuss with your child how equally important it is both to protect and be responsible with other people's private/personal information.
- ✎ **Set the expectation that your teen's online activity will be monitored.** Do spot checks on her/his computer and mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, portable media players, etc.) to review pictures/videos and online activities.

# Keeping Teens 13 to 15 Years of Age Healthy & Safe

As your teen gets older, you will notice changes in her/his behaviour and interests. While it's exciting to see your child seek more independence, there are new personal and online safety concerns that you should be aware of as well. The following section outlines some of the more common characteristics of teens 13 to 15 years of age.

## The Growing Personality

Teens 13 to 15 years of age:

- ✘ Value acceptance and belonging as they explore their identity
- ✘ Have an increased focus on their appearance and the opinions of others
- ✘ Believe others are always watching and judging them (egocentric)
- ✘ Are very sensitive, easily humiliated, and are extremely concerned about social judgment
- ✘ Demonstrate a 'pseudo-maturity' by appearing to handle more than they are developmentally ready for
- ✘ Seek deeper relationships (they may use the Internet to confide in others)
- ✘ Distance themselves from parents to form their own identity
- ✘ Take emotional risks in the search for their own identity
- ✘ Explore their sexuality — it's natural for teens to be curious about sexuality, and they may want to look at pictures and explore sexual subjects
- ✘ Demand privacy
- ✘ Focus on whether their behaviour conforms to the behaviour of others, not on whether it is right or wrong
- ✘ Are positively influenced by the presence of safe adults

## Online Activities

Teens 13 to 15 years of age:

- ✘ Spend a lot of time on social networking sites and blogs communicating with others and sharing pictures/videos
- ✘ Use instant messaging and social networking applications (better known as apps) to communicate with others
- ✘ Play online games with other online users, and in many cases, chat with those users during gameplay
- ✘ Use mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, portable media players, etc.), webcams and digital cameras to take and send pictures/videos
- ✘ Use peer-to-peer programs to download music, games and videos

## What Can You Do As a Parent?

- ✘ Do spot checks to see what your teen is posting online and reinforce expectations around only posting appropriate pictures/videos.
- ✘ Encourage open communication at home and be conscious of your child's sensitivity to social judgment. S/he may be hesitant to share personal experiences.
- ✘ Set limits around how late in the day your teen can be online, such as establishing a time every night to shut off all electronic devices.
  - Note: Consider unplugging wireless routers, or for routers with such capabilities, scheduling a shut-down time.
- ✘ Learn about the GPS settings on your child's mobile device and understand how to disable this function for increased safety.
- ✘ Explore the *self/peer exploitation* section of the **Cybertip.ca** website to learn about supporting your teen, should s/he be involved in a "sexting" incident and refer your teen to the **NeedHelpNow.ca** website, if appropriate.

Receive important information to help keep your teen safe while using the various popular platforms on the Internet. [cybertip.ca/app/en/signup](http://cybertip.ca/app/en/signup)



## What Should You Talk to Your Teen About?

- ✎ Reinforce that the Internet is a public place where information shared with someone in confidence can easily be misused by others to embarrass her/him.
- ✎ Discuss respect and dignity and how her/his image can be affected by how s/he portrays her/himself online.
- ✎ Explain the importance of being careful with pictures posted or sent online. Reinforce that once a picture is sent, control over what happens to it is lost.
- ✎ Discuss personal boundaries with your teen. Explain that individuals who s/he encounters online who ask inappropriate/personal/sexual questions are breaking boundaries. Reinforce that these individuals should be blocked, as any information shared could easily be misused. These people are likely doing this to many other teens as well.
- ✎ Explain to your teen that it's illegal to threaten or bribe someone online or offline. If your teen is threatened online or someone tries to bribe or coerce your teen into sending inappropriate pictures/videos, s/he needs to tell a safe adult.
- ✎ Discuss the inaccurate representations of relationships in the media and explain the true qualities of healthy relationships (see [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca)).
- ✎ Advise your teen not to share her/his online usernames and passwords with anyone. Explain that popup ads and malicious sites may appear legitimate, but that email and messenger providers will never ask for usernames and passwords.



# Quick Facts – Your Child’s Online Interests



## Wi-Fi Capable Devices

Wi-Fi is a popular technology that allows an electronic device to exchange data wirelessly over a computer network. A device that can use Wi-Fi (such as a computer, video game console, smart phone or tablet) can not only connect to the Internet but may also connect to other resources on a network such as a webcam, printer or monitor.

## Apps for Mobile Devices (e.g. Facebook® Messenger, Facetime®, Kik® Messenger, Snapchat™, Instagram®, WhatsApp® Messenger, Vine®).

Apps are software that can be downloaded to a mobile device to extend the functions of the mobile device. These may include games, chat or instant messaging tools, photo or video sharing tools, social networking tools as well as a variety of other features and tools.



## Blog Sites (e.g. Tumblr®, Blogger®)

A blog site is a discussion or informational site that enables an author to post content. Blogs typically relate to a particular topic but may also be used as public personal diary. A blog’s author can post text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and media and may also be able to re-blog content that another user has posted. Most blog sites allow other users to leave comments and some allow users to message each other.

## Chat Sites (e.g. Omegle™)

Chat sites allow users to chat with other users in a group or room setting. Messages in a chat room can be displayed for everyone accessing the room or can also occur one-on-one between users in the same room.

Chat sites may allow users voice chat or to share pictures, videos, or files. There are some chat sites that are designed for users to chat/video chat with strangers, enabling users to randomly connect with another individual without any information about who the individual is or where the individual is located.



## Peer-to-Peer (e.g. The Pirate Bay™, BitTorrent®)

These are programs that allow users to establish a connection through a peer-to-peer (also known as P2P) network and have direct access to shared files on each other’s computers. The network allows the exchange of files (e.g. videos, images, music, games, etc.) without utilizing a centralized server.

# Quick Facts – Your Child’s Online Interests (cont’d)



## Texting/Messaging Services on Mobile Devices (e.g. SMS/MMS, BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM®), iMessage®)

Short Message Service (SMS), more commonly known as text messaging, allows users to communicate with other users through brief, typed text. These messages can be easily deleted, leaving no trace of the message sent, or saved and distributed by malicious users. An extension of SMS, Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) allows users to send messages that include multimedia content such as pictures and videos. In addition to traditional SMS/MMS services, many mobile devices/smart phones offer a free texting service with the same capabilities, such as BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), offered on BlackBerry devices and iMessage, available through Messages App on iPhone®, iPad®, or iPod®.

## Instant Messaging (e.g. Skype®, Facebook® Messenger, Google® Hangouts™, Gmail®)



Instant messaging (also known as IM) allows users to send real-time messages to other users, also known as contacts, friends, or buddies. Short text messages are sent back and forth, and some IM programs also allow file transfer, webcam viewing, voice chat and other applications.



## Video Game Consoles (e.g. Playstation®, Xbox®, etc.)

A video game console is an interactive computer or electronic device that uses a TV or monitor to display the video game. More recently, video game consoles allow users to connect to the Internet so multiple players in any given game can interact online. While players can interact with each other through these games, the conversation history cannot be easily saved with these devices.

## Webcam

A webcam is a video camera that is often built-in to a computer or wireless device (e.g. smart phone, iPad®, etc.). A webcam may also be a separate device connected to a computer through a wired connection or over Wi-Fi.



Video captured by a webcam can be displayed over the Internet in real time and is often used in conjunction with instant messaging or chat applications. A webcam may also be used to capture still images.



## Avatar

An avatar is a pictorial representation of an individual. It may take the form of an animal, creature or person, and is often used in chat forums, games, and personal profiles.



## Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) (e.g. RuneScape®, World of Warcraft®, Clash of Clans®)

A MMOG is a type of online game where a large number of players interact with one another online in a virtual/fantasy world.

## Social Networking Sites (e.g. Facebook®, Google+™, Instagram®, Twitter®)



Social networking sites facilitate the building of social networks/relationships among people who may share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social networking site features profiles created by each user, information on the user's social contacts in the network, and provides a means for users to interact with other users over the Internet. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events and interests within a network or publicly, thereby encouraging individuals to post personal information (pictures, thoughts, etc.).

### TWITTER® TERMS

- ✦ **Tweet®** — Twitter is an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters known as “tweets.”
- ✦ **Retweet** — A retweet is when a user re-posts someone else's tweet to their followers. Sometimes users type “RT” at the beginning of the tweet to indicate that they are re-posting someone else's content.
- ✦ **Hashtag** — People use the hashtag symbol “#” before a keyword or phrase (with no spaces) in their tweet to categorize the tweet, making it easier to find/follow in Twitter searches.
- ✦ **Mentions** — Users can include the @username of another user in a retweet or in their own tweet to make the user aware of the tweet. Replies to tweets would also be considered mentions. Using a period before @username will enable all followers (of the account posting) to see the message.

### FACEBOOK® TERMS

- ✦ **Tag** — Facebook allows you to ‘tag’ individuals in photos posted to the social networking site so they are easily identifiable in the image. An individual's name is associated to the photo once s/he has been tagged in it.
- ✦ **Like** — Facebook allows you to ‘like’ posts made by users on the social networking site. Individuals ‘like’ posts in order to show a positive interest in a photo, video, comment, etc.
- ✦ **Hashtag** — Please see Twitter term above.

# Risks to Teens 13 to 15 Years of Age on the Internet

It's important to talk with your teen about strategies that will make her/his online experiences safer.

## Content

### Exposure to Sexually Explicit Material

It is common for teens to be curious about sexuality. There is an unlimited amount of information available online, some of which can be informative but some of which can be harmful and/or illegal. Discuss the importance of thinking critically about information they read or view online. Discuss the qualities that make up healthy relationships — what a healthy relationship looks like, sounds like and feels like.

## Contact

### Building Relationships Online

When talking with your teen, explain that sexual attention from an adult is illegal.

### Did you Know?

In Canada, any electronic communication between an adult and a child that is, or could be perceived as, sexual in nature may be illegal.

The criminal offence is known as online luring. Online luring should be reported to police or **Cybertip.ca**.

Teach your adolescent how to get out of uncomfortable conversations and/or relationships. Explain how individuals can manipulate emotions to try to get teens to send inappropriate pictures or information that they may later regret. For more information, refer to the *Internet Safety* page on **Cybertip.ca**.

### Threats and Coercion

Individuals seeking to exploit teens may use threats or coercion to increase compliance that could result in the teen sending a sexually inappropriate picture (e.g. sexually suggestive, partial or full nudity) of her/himself. Talk to your teen about the use of and illegal nature of online threats. Explain to your teen that s/he should never comply with threats, and should seek a safe adult for help.

## Conduct

### Public Nature of the Internet

Teens are using the Internet to test limits and experiment with identity, often underestimating the public nature of the Internet. Teens engage in private conversations and share private information, unaware of the lasting consequences of their behaviour. Discuss with teens the risks of online activities such as having sexually explicit conversations or sharing sexually explicit material with people online. Teach your teen that once material is sent online, control over what happens to the material is lost, and subsequent exposure can be devastating.

### Lack of Boundaries

Boundaries can be quickly crossed online. Individuals looking to exploit teens quickly turn conversations sexual, asking personal questions about puberty and development. Make sure your teen knows s/he can tell you if s/he experiences such an interaction, without fear of getting in trouble.

### Connecting Online

Teens use the Internet to connect with others, often creating an online persona. Behaviour tends to be less inhibited online, so teens may engage in behaviour that they would not engage in offline. As a result, they can quickly find themselves in situations they think they can handle, yet do not always have the experience to appropriately deal with.





**CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION®**

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

**The Canadian Centre for Child Protection** is a registered charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce child victimization by providing programs and services to Canadians.

## The Door That's Not Locked — All web. No net.

The Canadian Centre is committed to helping parents, teachers, and anyone else who would like to better understand the good, the bad, and the ugly about the web. We're here to help keep kids safe while exploring and enjoying the online world. To learn more, visit us at [thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca](http://thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca).

To make a report about the online sexual exploitation of a child, go to [cybertip.ca](http://cybertip.ca).

### Founding Partners:



### Supported by:



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

More information on child safety is available at [protectchildren.ca](http://protectchildren.ca) or by contacting us at:

615 Academy Road  
Winnipeg, MB R3N 0E7  
204.945.5735  
1.800.532.9135

© 2010-2016, Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. No copying or distribution including posting online without permission. All Rights Reserved, except copies of this brochure may be printed for personal use.

ISBN 978-1-927103-72-2 (English print) | 978-1-927103-73-9 (English electronic)  
June 2016

"CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION", "The Door That's Not Locked" and "All web. No net." are registered in Canada as trademarks; and "Cybertip.ca ALERTS" is used as a trademark of; of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. All other trademarks used herein are the property of their respective owners.

The safety tips and other information provided herein are intended as general information only, not as advice. Readers should assess all information in light of their own circumstances, the age and maturity level of the child they wish to protect and any other relevant factors.