

INSTAGRAM



WHAT EVERY **PARENT** NEEDS TO KNOW

www.sociallyactive.com

About SociallyActive



SociallyActive is the leading provider of social-privacy monitoring software for parents. **We give parents the tools to help you protect your children on social networks.**

We've developed easy-to-use, smart technology that allows **you to take a proactive approach to protecting your children's privacy** and identity online.

We believe in keeping our kids safe online in a way that respects their privacy while protecting their reputation and family's character.

SociallyActive is easy to use and takes the guesswork out of checking-in on your child's use of social networks. As fellow parents we know that sometimes there's a lot going on, and a little help from our fellow parents goes a long way.

We've coupled innovative technology with leading research to create **a service for parents to safeguard their children online.** In fact, we use it with our own families, too.

Please go to <http://sociallyactive.com> to learn more and start protecting your child online today.

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What is Instagram?

Instagram is an online social networking service that lets you share photos and apply a variety of filters to them. This started in 2010 as a photo-sharing platform viewable only amongst its user and has since expanded to include a wide variety of social media including Twitter and Facebook. The Instagram application is distributed worldwide through the Apple Store and Google Play.

Instagram photos are easily recognizable because the pictures it releases have a square shape reflective of the Instamatic and Polaroid photos the program was modelled after.

Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012 and quickly continued to grow in popularity. In December 2012 a new Terms of Service was released by Instagram which gave them the resale rights for all photographs. The instant public outcry forced them to retract the terms and retract their publishing rights to the photos.

It Looked Fine?

Like anything else it has a dark side. What was promised to be a simple, fun way to share photos has been corrupted by many, but like any smart parent you knew that was a possibility. After doing your research and looking at everything you weren't too worried. The program was great to send out photos, but it was too awkward to really browse through the photo histories. Odds were pretty good that no one was going to go through that much trouble.

When you let your teen sign up, you did everything a parent should do. You talked about appropriate photos, had them set the account to private and told them to only share with friends. You even occasionally looked to see what they are posting. There hasn't been any problems and you want to keep it that way.

Unfortunately, since your child signed up, things have changed. In April 2012 Facebook acquired this application and it's use has exploded. Now those photos can go almost anywhere and to make matters worse you can browse through all of them in a few brief moment by going to [Instagram.com/\[USER NAME\]](https://www.instagram.com/[USER NAME]).

Now it's only a matter of seconds for someone to find last years photo of your daughter in a bikini or your bare-chested son lifting weights. The worst part is that it wasn't your children that posted those, it was their friends.

What Parents Need to Know

Instagram is the newest mega-social network that every parent needs to be aware of. Instagram is a photo editing and sharing 'app' that allows users to edit photos taken on their phone and post them to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter with the click of a button. Instagram photos are open to the public by default and Instagram lets users browse public photos posted by others and by people whom they follow.

Sounds innocent enough, but it presents several threats to children. As is the case with virtually all social networks, signing up for an Instagram account requires that the user provide a Username. In many cases young children are using their real first and last names to create their accounts. To make matters worse, the sign-up process has an optional phone number section where users can submit their phone number as part of their public profile. The key word here is 'public.'

Many Internet crime authorities are reporting increases in the number of online predators leaving lewd or sexually suggestive comments on tween and teen photos. To make matters worse, online predators leaving lewd comments isn't the only thing you have to worry about. While pornography involving minors is still illegal, there are dozens of websites dedicated to bikini and sexually suggestive pictures of minors, which are legal. In other words, those beach vacation pictures your daughter is innocently posting to Instagram may in fact end up on a message board for perverts.

Once an Instagram profile has been created, anyone can browse them and follow other Instagram users. There is an option to make an Instagram profile private, and similar to Facebook, users have to send a

request to connect to that person. However, as is the case with dating sites and other social networks, online predators use fake names and fake profile photos to make them appear to be someone they are not.

What is a Follower?

Once a connection has been accepted they become a follower. All followers have access to both the user's profile information and photos. For unsuspecting children who don't know any better, this means they have access to their first and last name and phone number. As a parent, the last thing you want is an online predator having access to your child's name and phone number displayed right along side a photo history of their daily activities.

How to Get an Account

Odds are pretty good that your teen knows what Instagram is and even uses it on their phone to share photos with their friends. Instagram is available for anyone 13 years and up, so it's not hard for anyone to have an account on it.

Signing up for an Instagram account is easy and takes only a few minutes. Unfortunately all that you need is an Android or Apple based phone.

Go to the Apps section of your phone and do a search for Instagram. Once it appears select and load it, then select sign up. Once you do this you will be able to share your photos with others online.

The simplicity of the sign up is why parents should closely monitor the bill as your teen doesn't need to verify identify or secure your permission to obtain an account.

#Hashtags

A hash tag is a keyword or short phrase with the pound sign in front of it (#) and no spaces between words. On Instagram hashtags are used to 'tag' a photo with relevant phrases or keywords that would make it easier for someone to find. You could tag a photo of a vehicle as **#car #ford #mustang**, or simply tag it as **#fordmustang**, or any combination of the above. You can put up to 30 hashtags on each photo.

How to Apply Hashtags

When applying a hashtag, try to keep it as relevant to the photo as possible, perhaps look at how others have tagged similar photos. There are two ways to apply a hashtag;

1. After choosing a filter for a newly loaded photo, type your #hashtag in the Caption field
2. If you want to tag a photo you've already uploaded, just include your #hashtag in a comment on your photo

Once a photo has been tagged it will appear in relevant searches by your followers, along with other photos sharing the same tag that are accessible to their view.

Your Teen and Hashtags

The hashtags used by your teen and their friends should be looked at occasionally. Unfortunately certain hashtags such as **#swimsuit**, which may seem innocuous, can draw a lot of unwanted attention. If that photo accidentally goes public it will suddenly find itself in the midst of hundreds of others with the same hashtag and unfortunately there are people who specifically troll photos for certain hashtags. The more hashtags on a photo, the easier it is for a troll to find. A simple hashtag of **#swimsuit** will hopefully blend in with the rest, but if they enhance it by adding tags such as **#bikini**, **#girls**, **#girlfriends**, or **#sexy**, then they are putting themselves further out there and making themselves stand out. Keep the tags simple, limit them to only three or four relevant tags and then if the photo does accidentally go public the odds of it being seen by unsavoury characters is a lot less.

Security

Security of your child is important to you, no matter what their age. Now that they have an account here are some areas that you should find important.

Photo sharing

Once the account is created it is vital that you, as a parent, discuss limits and restrictions with your teen. Let them know what you expect of them and occasionally review their photo stream so you can be sure that they aren't posting or receiving inappropriate photos.

1. Choose a secure password, don't use common words, birthdays or cities. To increase the security of the password use a mix of numbers and symbols with upper and lower case letters.
2. Ensure that the photo sharing is set to Private this will prevent the photos from going out publicly where anyone can view them. You can set the Privacy setting through the Instagram interface by going to Settings and scrolling down to the setting labelled "Photos are Private" or "Photo Privacy" and ensuring it is turned on.
3. Work with your teen to select an appropriate profile photo that you can both agree on. It's best to avoid using an actual photo of your teen and instead find something that best represents your teen or their interests.

The photos may not be going out publicly but the photos can still be viewed by everyone that has chosen to follow your teen. If you want to see who is viewing their photos then once more head over to Settings on the Instagram interface. You will see a number of Instagram followers, tap the number and it will list out the followers of your teen. By tapping on each name you can view their profile. If you wish to block them tap on the menu button and the option to report them for spam or to block them. Once they are blocked or reported they will no longer see your teens photos and your teen will no longer see them.

Just setting the privacy on Instagram may not be enough. If the account is connected to Twitter, Facebook or another form of social media you will have to ensure that each of those programs are also set to private and will not share the photos.

Photo Map

Another thing to worry about for your teens privacy is the Photo Map. This creates a map of where they have been for the different photos. If your photos are already set to private, then no one, not even the followers can see the map.

If you are worried about the photo map being made public it is easy to remove, just ensure that the "Add to Photo Map" option is set to off.

If there are already several photos tagged into the photo map you can remove them by doing the following;

1. Go into the profile and select the Photo Map button
2. Select a photo from the map and zoom into it
3. Select the edit button and tell it to unpin the photo and proceed to tap on each photo. It will ask you if you wish to confirm the deletion.

Removing Photos

There will always be those moments of regret when something was posted that really shouldn't have been. Sometimes they are accidentally posted, other times they were of the spur of the moment. Unfortunately you can not have the pictures unseen, but you can remove them from your feed.

1. Go into the profile
2. Below the profile details there should be all of the photos that have been shared in Instagram. They will either be displayed as a grid or on a scroll bar, depending upon your system.

3. Just to the bottom right of the photo you will see a menu button, select it and a pop-up menu will appear.
4. Select Delete from the menu, confirm deletion and the photo is gone from the feed.

Protecting Your Children

The boom in social media has led to the subsequent misuse of innocent social tools by predators and bullies. As a result there is a chance, albeit small that your teenagers photos will fall into the wrong hands.

Of course, we can not protect them from everything and they will be exposed to things that we would rather they weren't. You can't bubble wrap your teenager or lock them in a closet, they will be exposed to the world eventually. The best approach is to teach your children the importance of being safe online. They get driving lessons to protect them on the road, they learn fire safety to keep from getting burned. Teach them Internet safety to protect their future.

Give Them the Tools

The best thing you can do is give them the tools to deal with it and let them know the best way that they can protect themselves.

- Pseudonyms

Work with your teen to come up with a good screen name. Pick one that can be identifiable as them and is as unique as they are. Ensure that it's not a screen name that will haunt their future, many of us still use the same screen names we created twenty years ago, and those names have become as identifiable with us as our given names. They don't need to put their real information out there.

- Privacy Settings

Ensure that your teens profile and photos aren't out there for everyone to look at. If their profile isn't on private then switch it over. This will ensure that only approved friends will see the photos.

- Location Settings

Turn off the Geo-tagging or Location of photos, that way even if a photo gets out to the public, hopefully no one knows where your child is.

- Accepting Followers

If they don't know who the person is in real life, then they probably shouldn't accept them as a follower.

- Avoid Portraits

Teens are a vain lot, but try to discourage them from posting photos of themselves or their friends. If there aren't photos out there, then they can't slip out.

- Talk

Continue to talk to your children about what they are posting and what they are allowed to post. Encourage them to talk to their friends about appropriate posting and their own privacy settings. Your teen may do everything correctly, but all it takes is a careless friend and that beach photo could end up public.

Monitoring

Talk to them and make them aware of the dangers while still allowing them a modicum of earned freedom. Insist that your teen grants you periodic access to their account so you can check their postings and what is being posted by their friends. Join Instagram yourself, so that you are aware of their processes and terms and follow your teen so that you have a remote way of checking what is accessible on their accounts and you can see what others have access to.

Privacy Concerns

Some of the policy changes became big news because they originally proposed that members names, photos and other content could be used in advertising and marketing. This posed a threat to the security and privacy of its users. After the big initial outcry Instagram removed that portion of the ToS.

But since it became associated with Facebook there have been other issues cropping up that had previously gone relatively unnoticed. Instagram provides access to strangers photos, and essentially lives. Teenagers as young as 13 use Instagram, and while the majority of its use is innocent and kept among friends there is the chance that the photos will be viewed and used inappropriately.

There was a particular vulnerability in Instagram when it came to your photos. Anyone could add you as a “friend” and therefore have access to the photos that you have set as private as well as all of your profile information. Once someone had access to the photos on your profile they could be downloaded and used for other purposes. Instagram did resolve this problem but the fact that this was even a problem in the first place should raise concerns with parents all around the world.

Even with this issue resolved there are still problems. The procedure to make a photo private is not straight forward which means that people, especially teens, will get lazy and not secure the photos. This leaves the photos of your teens, as well as their profiles visible to the public.

Ownership

You know that Instagram is an online social networking service used for sharing photos. It lets you take a picture and apply a digital filter and tags to it then share with family and friends. When the pictures are uploaded they become known as streams and other people will enjoy looking at them.

Copyright Violations

It's not all light and cheery, there is a dark side to using this social networking site. One of the negative aspects is that people will take pictures and repost them onto their own accounts without giving credit to the original owner. This is a blatant violation of Instagram policies.

It is important to monitor the pictures that teenagers are putting on this social networking site in order to ensure that they are not in breach of the terms. When people open an account on Instagram they are agreeing to only use content that they actually own or have a suitable license to use. Another term that is stated on the site is that the use and posting of content on the site does not violate privacy rights, copyright laws, contract rights or publicity rights. Unfortunately there is no enforcement of these terms, and even if there was, it only takes a matter of minutes for someone to open a new account and begin again.

If your teen is reposting other photos without giving credit, put a stop to it. Let them know what they are doing wrong. Ask them how they would feel if someone reposted something of theirs and claimed credit? Or if one of their photos went out to the public?

Private Photo Distribution

It is not uncommon for people to take pictures from other accounts and use them as their own. Many times these photos are reposted on boards that you do not want your teen associated with. If your teens photo ends up on these boards there is often nothing that the site can or will do. Making it difficult to remove the photos. Even if you do remove the photos the damage has already been done and that picture of your teen has been seen by tens or even hundreds of people you didn't want looking at your child.

Teenagers are spontaneous and often do things without thinking. The last thing you want is for your teen to be adversely affected by a photo that they posted. By monitoring your teens Instagram photo stream you can be aware of what they are posting and be prepared to put an instant stop to it before that photo goes too far. The last thing you or your teen need is to find that the photo has gotten into the hands of a bully, or even worse, a stalker or molester. You can protect your teen by having an open and

honest conversation about what you expect them to post and not post on their Instagram account. Let them know that you are watching, not because you distrust them, but because you care.

No Camera Policies

There are numerous locations, such as pools and even school events, that have begun to implement a camera or photo rule in order to prevent individuals from sharing photos on social networking sites such as Instagram. Ensure that your teen knows and respects these policies, because they are there for a reason.

Instagram has changed how people share pictures with each other. Photos are no longer shared only between you, friends and family. Social networks such as Instagram have gained a lot of popularity within a short period of time and have made it easier for private photos to leak out over the Internet.

Public places are beginning to prohibit the use of cameras because the public distribution of photos has become a problem in the exploitation of minors. They will use Instagram to post inappropriate content for the world to see. These same people are also taking your innocent photo and corrupting it. While the photo of your daughters swim team may seem innocent to you, others are ogling them as swimsuit photos of young girls.

People are beginning to use Instagram for the wrong reasons and in order to stop these happenings locations have banned the use of cameras. School events and other public places do not want to deal with the backlash that may result from the public use of photos and as such many have banned the use of cameras or require a release form to be signed, especially when children are involved.

There are other reasons to be cautious about photos you distribute through any social network. There have been cases where someone's family photos have been used commercially, without their knowledge. Other times when a private photo has slipped into the public eye it has led to public ridicule and in the case of some, job dismissal.

No matter what you post, please keep in mind that it takes only a few seconds for the photo to go public.

10 Things to Know Before Joining A Social Network

In this modern age the Internet is everywhere, you can't avoid it, almost everyone spends some time on-line. It has increased communications and knowledge. However; it can be a double-edged sword, the increase in communication has also increased the danger. By talking to your kids about the basics you can protect them in the virtual world as well as you have in the real world.

1. Not everything is true

The Internet is a breeding ground of false information. Anyone can be published on the web, anything can be written with no factual basis. The worst part is that it is frequently broadcast by several people. Always check to ensure the source is credible, even then check a few reputable sites to determine what the real facts are, as everyone writes from their own point of view.

2. Not everyone is who they seem to be

Believe it or not some of the people you meet on-line are lying about who they really are. Sometimes adults pretend to be kids and kids pretend to be adults. They all have their own reasons, some are predators, others just don't like who they are. Unless you know someone in real life then don't fully trust them to be what you think they are.

3. Don't plagiarize

If you cut and paste something and pass it off as your own, it's a copyright violation. Just like for a school report, give credit to the original author or artist.

4. The Internet is forever

Even after something is taken off of a social network or deleted from a blog, it can still be found. The second it is loaded onto a server it is spread across the world. There will always be a copy somewhere.

5. Privacy does not exist on-line

Just because social networks let you adjust privacy settings and change who sees what, that doesn't mean it's private. All it takes is a server glitch or a few seconds for someone to cut and paste it where the world can see.

6. Google yourself occasionally

Check your name on the various search engines. Sometimes what you find is humorous, you discover that you have a namesake in Sri Lanka or New York. Other times you might be surprised at what you see. You might find accolades for being on a swim team or making the honor roll but you can find other things too. You might find your personal photos and details on someone else's site. It's a smart idea to try and keep a 'clean' search engine profile and know what is out there about you.

7. You don't have to friend everyone

You wouldn't necessarily talk to every stranger that walked up to you on the street, so don't accept every friend request. If you don't actually know them, do you want them having access to your information or your friends? Even if you add them to your social network, they still aren't a real-world 'friend' and don't need personal information on you.

8. You don't need every social network

If you don't socialize that much in real life, why do it on-line? Do you really need to have constant updates on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram from the same group of people? Odds are that they post the same things on all of their status's. Social profiles are not collectors cards, it doesn't matter how many you have, it's how you use them.

9. Keep the drama down

Anything you do or say on-line can, and probably will, be used against you. If you have an issue with someone then address it with them in person, not on-line. Written words do not convey emotion and can be easily taken out of context. The same goes for cruel comments and crude jokes. Just don't do it.

10. Be discreet

Just because you can share something, doesn't mean you should. Use discretion and common sense when posting on-line. If you post about expensive gifts or purchases, or when you're going on vacation then you are just asking for someone to rob you. If it is not something you want to see on a billboard, then don't post it.

Take Our Instagram Challenge

Here's our challenge to all parents and guardians. Whether your child is already on Instagram or you are considering letting them get an account, then we ask you to download the app and spend an hour browsing through the selection of photos that your child is going to be exposed to.

Here's how to start:

1. Download Instagram on your phone.
2. Sign up for an account.
3. Browse the photos that are being posted.
4. Do a search for a couple of hashtags commonly used by many teens, such as #teen, #girl, #cute, #drugs and #ihateschool
5. Sign-up for a one-year subscription to SociallyActive so that we can help you monitor and manage your teen's privacy on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

If you don't wish to download the application, or your phone just isn't capable of it, you can go to a site like Statigram and browse through Instagram photos on there.

Here's the thing to keep in mind: whether your child chooses to post pictures of themselves online or not, they now have access to the social jungle and everything that comes along with it.

Protect Your Children

Remember that the shocking news stories are set out there in order to shock you and grab your attention, these incidents only represent a small percentage of what actually occurs. However, as a parent you have a right to be concerned and protective. You don't want your teenager to be one of the news stories and that is nothing to be ashamed of.

Social media is growing and everyday it becomes a more intricate part of our daily lives as the new generation is absorbed into it. Let's teach this next generation about taking control of their own safety and show them how to stay aware when they are online.