

## *Growing Up Online*

### A Viewer's Guide for Parents

#### Introduction

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This guide for parents accompanies the documentary *Growing Up Online*, which takes viewers inside the private worlds that kids are creating online, raising important questions about how the Internet is transforming the experience of adolescence. Inside you'll find:

- Short readings and "Take Action!" activity ideas about issues introduced in the film, including:
  - Building parent-teen engagement with online media (page 2)
  - Visual models that help you become more effective in dealing with your teens and the Web (pages 3 and 4)
  - Fear of predators online (page 5)
  - Media management in the home (pages 6-8)
  - Online relationships and cyberbullying (pages 9-11)
- A comprehensive annotated list of resources for learning more, including books and Web sites for parents and teens (pages 12-14)

In addition, you can take an online **Cyberquiz: "What Kind of Cyber Guide are You?"** to find out more about your style of media management. And you can find a comprehensive set of discussion questions related to the issues addressed in the film by downloading the *Growing Up Online* Teacher's Guide: ([www.pbs.org/frontline/teach/kidsonline](http://www.pbs.org/frontline/teach/kidsonline))

#### Credits

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This guide was written by Renee Hobbs and Kelly Mendoza at Temple University's Media Education Lab at the School of Communications and Theater in Philadelphia, Pa. ([www.mediaeducationlab.com](http://www.mediaeducationlab.com)). Simone Bloom Nathan, Milton Chen and Faith Rogow served as members of the advisory team.

## Building Parent-Teen Engagement with Online Media

The FRONTLINE program shows several different ways parents engage with their teens' online lives. Some parents, such as the parents of Greg and Jess, allowed their teens to be online as much as they wanted, whenever they wanted, even though they weren't quite sure what the kids were doing. Other parents were very involved in their teens' online lives. For example, Cam's mom, Evan Skinner, was very engaged, but also anxious and concerned about what could happen to her kids online.

Parents use many different styles of engagement with their teens' online lives. There's no one right way to be engaged. The following chart and model provide a model for some of the steps that parents may use to build effective parent-teen engagement with online media.

### I. Tips for Parents and Teens

This chart shares some themes that address parent-teen engagement with online media based on the interactions depicted in the program. In the left-hand column, advice is provided for parents to move from being an Over-the-Shoulder Glancer, one who is less involved, to a Conversation Starter, a parent who is actively engaged with his or her child's online life. In the right-hand column, there is advice for tweens and teens that parallels the themes in the parent column. In the middle are buttons with arrows going in both directions to symbolize two-way communication and open interaction between parents and teens. Discuss together: Which of these different kinds of advice is most helpful? Which is least helpful? Why?

### II. What's the Process?

This model illustrates the "Tips for Parents and Teens" chart in a visual model. It depicts the steps a parent might use to move from being less knowledgeable and engaged to being more knowledgeable and having a better understanding of his or her child's online life. Parents can use the model to think about how to increase engagement, communication and knowledge of what their kids do online.

Look over the chart below, and discuss the following:

- Why do you think the first two steps highlighted in orange are separated from the other four steps highlighted in green? What are the differences?
- Which of these communication practices were depicted in the FRONTLINE program? Which were not shown? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these practices?

#### **Take Action!**

##### **Advice to Teens: How to Deal with Parents**

Review the chart that provides advice for parents to consider in talking with their teens about online media. Notice that it is designed as a process model, with a series of steps and stages. Rewrite the chart for younger teens so that it offers strategic, useful advice to them in dealing with their parents about issues of online media use. What advice would help teens be more effective in dealing with their parents' concerns about life online?

#### **Take Action!**

##### **4 UR EYES ONLY**

In what ways did previous generations of teens keep things private from their parents? Can an online space be a private space even though it is potentially accessible to all Internet users? Interview your parents and grandparents to discover some of the strategies they may have used to be alone and to interact with peers outside of school without parental intervention. Ask them about their use of the bedroom, the diary, the phone, the library, the corner store, the mall, the church basement or other hangouts as private spaces. How were these similar to and different from the strategies teens use today?

## I. Building Parent-Teen Engagement with Online Media: Tips for Parents and Teens

### PARENTS

### TEENS

#### Assess Family Use of Online Media

- How much time is spent online? By whom?
- Where is the computer used?
- What kinds of activities is it used for?
- What are you comfortable or uncomfortable with?



#### How Do I Use Media?

- How much time do I spend online? Is it affecting my schoolwork, relationships or other activities?
- What do I do online? Is it in line with what I would want others to know about me when I'm not online?
- What's important to me?

#### Have Conversations

- Think of ways to talk about what your kids do online -- make time for talking about it.
- It's never too early to start! Kids are online very young -- many start in preschool -- so the earlier you start showing an interest in their online lives, the more normal talking about it will be.



#### Share Something

- Do your parents know how to IM? Start a profile page? If not, show them!
- P.S. You don't have to share *everything* - some things are your own stuff. But showing parents how to do some things might help them feel less anxious.

#### Establish Rules and Guidelines

- Create a list of priorities reflecting your family's most important concerns. Provide a rationale that makes sense to your child. Post the list by the computer.



#### House Rules

- Whether you have rules from your parents or guidelines you set for yourself, it's a good idea to ask yourself, am I "addicted" to anything online? How is this affecting me?

#### Observe Your Child's Behavior

- Teens need some privacy, but excessive secrecy, hiding and withdrawal should be discussed. Ask direct questions to get answers.



#### What I Do Online

- Are you afraid of being caught doing something online? Sometimes we just want to be alone, but if you're being secretive and hiding what you do online from everyone else, you might want to ask yourself why.

#### Communicate Concerns and Enforce Violations

- Is there a problem? Are you sticking to your house rules?
- Sometimes you just have to pull the plug to get the message across.



#### Show How You're Safe

- Show your parents you're trustworthy by explaining what happens when you get an unwanted e-mail or solicitation, or if someone is mean to you online. Parents will feel better knowing that you know how to be safe online.

#### Connect with Your Community

- Share your experiences with other parents in order to increase the visibility of these issues for other parents of adolescents.

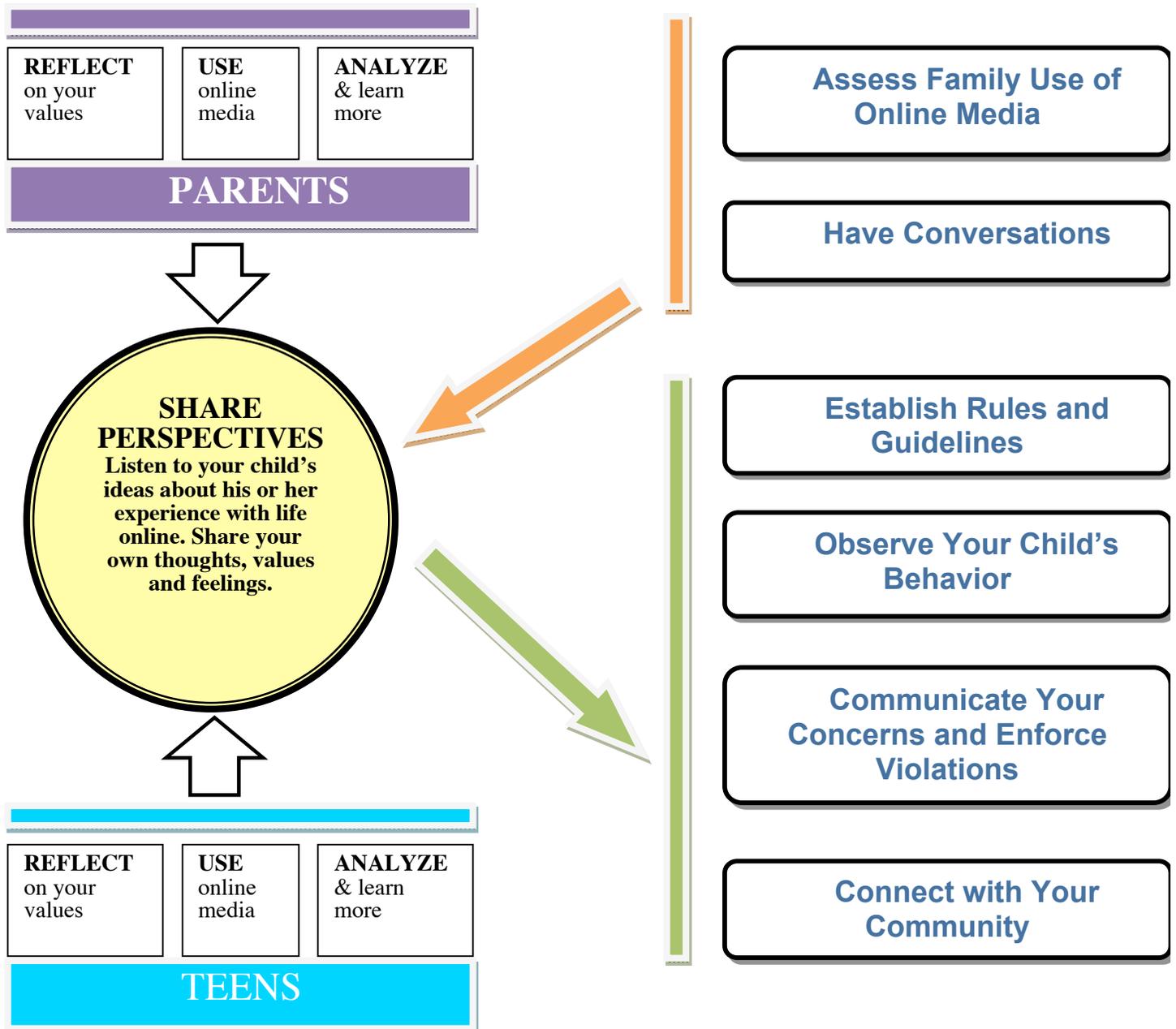


#### Expand Your Horizons

- Explore how to volunteer in your community or make a change in the world.
- Learn something new, like how to write games, mash music or remix videos.

## II. Building Parent-Teen Engagement with Online Media: What's the Process?

This model shows some of the steps involved in building effective parent-teen engagement with online media. You can see how the goal is for parents and teens to share perspectives about life online by reflecting on their own values, effectively using online media, and analyzing media to learn more. Illustrated on the right are several boxes showing steps that can help support the communication process.



## Issue to Explore -- Fear of Predators: A Substitute for Fear of Sexuality?

Exposure to sexual and pornographic material is a part of adolescent life online. Throughout the 20th century, teens and young adults have used explicit pictures, films or books to explore their emerging sexuality. Like many of their parents, American youth have conflicted attitudes about pornography, which generates billions of dollars annually in the United States and around the world. Sexually explicit content is present in most aspects of contemporary culture, including in movies, TV shows, advertising, magazines and fashion.

Shows like *Desperate Housewives* entertain us with stereotypes of raunchy, provocative parents and their more responsible and well-adjusted teen children, reinforcing the baby boomer cliché that adults are screwed up and "the kids are all right." Because parents may feel uncomfortable talking about sexuality, there is silence in many families surrounding the topic of sexual media.

At the same time, there is an incessant drumbeat about the threat of the sexual predator. This stereotype has been made highly visible by programs like "To Catch a Predator," which is a series of hidden-camera investigations broadcast on the program *Dateline NBC*. In more than a dozen programs since 2004, viewers have learned that predators are everywhere -- and they can be normal-looking men like firefighters, attorneys and teachers.

While this is a real problem, research shows that teens are more likely to have sexual interactions online with friends and acquaintances, not with strangers. For some teen boys and girls, a troubled home life, low self-esteem and other psychological problems may lead them to adopt sexualized identities in an effort to get attention. These factors are also associated with teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

For other teens, however, the virtual world may offer a safer environment for exploring their emerging sexuality than in the real world. Teens may see online pornography, erotic chat and cybersex as a type of innocuous play, one that has little negative impact or repercussions outside of the virtual world. But playing with online sexual intimacy can be problematic if it establishes patterns of behavior that may negatively affect the expression of real-life intimacy.

**DISCUSS:** *What are the moral issues concerning pornography, erotic chat and cybersex? Is erotic chat and cybersex fundamentally different from real-life sexuality, or is it more or less the same thing? Is it a dangerous, unhealthy behavior or a relatively safe form of sexual expression?*

### **Take Action!**

#### **Fear-Wretched or Far-Fetched?**

Why do programs such as "To Catch a Predator" spread fear about online predators? Why is it that parents get so many messages about online predators? Explore the issue further by reading interviews with parents and experts under "Keeping Kids Safe" on the *Growing Up Online* Web site, [www.pbs.org/frontline/kidsonline](http://www.pbs.org/frontline/kidsonline).

## Issue to Explore -- How Parents Manage Media: Online Challenges

Whenever the negative impact of media on kids' emotional, physical and social lives is highlighted, people often say: "It's the parents' fault! They should know what their kids are doing. It's their responsibility!" It is easy to judge parents -- after all, most media consumption happens within the home. However, parents' role as their kids' media managers is not that easy. Parents face tough challenges managing media in the home, and these challenges are amplified in our increasingly media-saturated, wireless, digital culture.

According to the research, parents fall into three different categories styles to manage their kids' media in the home: Over-the-Shoulder Glancer, Rule Maker and Conversation Starter.

The *Over-the-Shoulder Glancer* style is the most practiced form of media management. Examples include simply "vegging out" in front of the TV together, glancing to see what Web sites the child is on, or letting the child use most media in his or her room. Overall, there is a lack of guidance or conversation about media.

Being a *Rule Maker* is another strategy parents use to deal with media in the home. This includes setting limits on time or content, such as telling a child he or she can't watch TV until the day's homework is done or making certain Web sites off-limits through online filtering software. Although the Rule Maker style can be effective in some cases, research shows kids often find ways around rules, and parents do not always enforce them. Filtering and blocking software is not always effective -- some kids find loopholes in the software, or they are blocked from information that may be beneficial to them, such as health or educational information.

A *Conversation Starter* is a style parents are least likely to use, yet it is one of the most effective ways to manage media. Parents who are Conversation Starters know what kinds of media their children use, and have listened to, read or watched some, if not most, of it. The Conversation Starter style is the most beneficial way to mitigate negative media effects, such as aggressive attitudes and behaviors, negative body image and persuasion by advertising. Conversation Starters allow parents and kids to practice a healthy skepticism -- they can enjoy media they love, but also engage in deeper thinking about how it might impact their lives. These parents do two things: (1) share perspectives about their thoughts, values and feelings about media; and (2) ask questions about media messages, including thinking about the "behind-the-scenes" messages and values depicted in media content.

Based on this information, you might think, "Parents should just be Conversation Starters!" But it's not that easy. Parents face multiple challenges in managing their kids' media, especially the Internet. The computer is different from other forms of media, which makes it more difficult to manage. Unlike a television, the computer is designed to be used by one person, with one mouse and one keyboard. The screen is a smaller screen than the average television, making it difficult for parents to simply sit down and go online with their kids and see what sites they're visiting. In addition, the computer may be placed in different areas of the home, unlike television, which is often the focal point of a common area. It may be more difficult for parents to know what their kids are doing online if everyone in the family is on their own computer, or when the computer is in a child's bedroom or a separate room of the house. And it may be more tempting for kids to do things online that their parents wouldn't approve of if they were in a private space.

There are many factors that influence a parent's online media management, including communication style, attitude toward the Internet, comfort level with the technology, accessibility,

### Parents' Media Management: Three Styles

An **Over-the-Shoulder Glancer** is a parent who has little to do with the child's media life. He or she might occasionally watch, read or listen to something with the child, but not offer guidance or talk about it.

A **Rule Maker** is a parent who sets limits, rules and boundaries on media form (what kind of media) and content (what messages the media sends) that his or her kids are expected to follow. This parent relies on rules as the main form of media management.

A **Conversation Starter** is a parent who asks questions about media messages, starts discussions, shares values about media, and engages with his or her child's media life.

personal background, and his or her own media habits. Check out the chart on the following page that describes these factors in detail.

What parents do with kids is important. Parents who are Conversation Starters help their kids be more critical media consumers by sharing perspectives and discussing the "who, what, when, where, how and why" of media messages. Any parent can improve his or her Conversation Starter style -- the earlier the better. And kids can help address their parents' apprehension about what they do online by sharing parts of their online life and teaching their parents new things. Together, kids and parents can enjoy the Internet while at the same time thinking more deeply about life online. Parents might see that kids' online lives are not so separate from their offline lives.

## Discussion Questions

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1. If you are a parent, think back to how your parents intervened with media in the home when you were in preschool or elementary school. Did they watch television with you and ask questions about the things you saw on TV? Think of an example of when your parents shared their values about what they liked or didn't like. Now think about today and how you as a parent intervene with the media your children use. How is it the same or different? How has the change in technology over the past few years changed the way you deal with media in the home?
2. One strategy often recommended is for parents to put media in social spaces in the home, with rules like, "No TV or computer in the bedroom." At what age is a child too young to have a personal computer? Why? How does the presence of wireless Internet access affect parental control over media use in the home?
3. More and more media devices are becoming wireless and mobile. Cell phones and game players with Internet and video are small enough to be taken anywhere. How do you think wireless and mobile media will affect the challenges that parents face in monitoring their kids' media use?

### Take Action!

#### The Disconnection Experiment

Choose a day when you commit to completely disconnecting yourself from all forms of media: Internet, phone/cell phone, TV/movies, radio, music (including iPods!), books, magazines and newspapers. Make sure to choose a typical day in your life -- not one when you're camping or playing sports all day. Consciously move through your day avoiding media contact. Can it be done? Reflect on your experience by considering the following questions:

- What were your initial feelings that day?
- What media did you miss most and why?
- What sorts of things did you do instead?
- Were you able to completely avoid *all* media?
- How did you feel at the end of the day?

If you're up for a real challenge, try disconnecting for two or more days -- even a whole week! If that's too much, try modifying the disconnection, such as not allowing electronic media, but allowing print media such as books, magazines or newspapers. This process can help you examine how online media functions in your life. A temporary disconnect can help people reflect on daily media-use choices that may seem natural or habitual.

## Taking Stock of Your Style: Parenting Style and Media Management

*There are six factors that affect parents' level of engagement with children's media use. Learn how each of these aspects of parenting style affects the way media are managed in the home.*

### Communication Style

How parents communicate with their child influences how they manage media. Some parents prefer communicating control and authority to keep harmony in the home. Other parents might communicate in open ways with their kids and encourage autonomy. Some parents are apathetic and laissez-faire in communication. The dynamics of how parents and children communicate together will influence media management.

### Attitude Toward the Internet

Some parents view the Internet as harmless entertainment; other parents are enthusiastic about it. Some parents may not have positive attitudes at all, worrying about the Internet because their kids have access to violent, sexual, racist, sexist and other disturbing material and to unknown people far beyond the ones in their immediate community. This leaves some parents feeling a loss of control -- they cannot shield kids from everything and everyone in the online universe.

### Media Habits

How parents use media for their own needs will influence how their kids use them. Parents model behaviors that influence their kids' beliefs about how a person uses and thinks about media. If parents are always online, their children will see this as normal behavior. If parents are secretive or withdrawn about their own use of online media, then teens will see this as their right, too. If parents engage in discussion about media with their children, having conversations like this will be common practice.

### Accessibility

Parents have to be available to their children in order to manage media. Today's family life is busy: Each day is chock full of school, after-school activities and other obligations. There seems to be little free time. Some parents are less accessible because of their work schedules or family or community obligations. And some parents are less accessible in the home -- they may be working or tending to the house. Parents often complain that although they would like to be more engaged with their children's media, they just don't have the time.

### Personal Background

Parents' personal background, including their gender, race, age and cultural background, are factors that influence media management style. Research shows that mothers manage media more than fathers. Younger kids get more attention than older kids, and parents manage girls' media use more than boys'. In many households, however, online media is often in the realm of the father or oldest son, so knowledge of computers and the Internet are additional factors that will influence media management. In addition to a parent's personal background, the child's background, including his or her age, gender and developmental level, influence how parents are engaged with their child's media use.

### Comfort Level

One reason many parents feel apprehensive about what their kids are doing online is because they simply don't know about online media. Many parents don't know how various Web sites work or what exactly their kids do with them. They might not be familiar with navigating kids' virtual spaces. This is why it is important for parents to ask their kids to show them what sites they enjoy going on and share what they do there. By learning more and discussing these things, parents will feel more comfortable about what their kids do online. They'll also be able to ask better questions and increase their ability to start conversations about online media.

## **Issue to Explore -- Online Relationships, Real Problems**

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As depicted in the FRONTLINE program, the story of Ryan Halligan brings to light the potentially tragic impact of cyberbullying. Ryan's story speaks to the larger issues of the differences between online relationships and offline relationships. When people are online, several factors come into play that can influence their communication behavior with others. Developing online relationships can be complicated by the factors of identity play, anonymity, disinhibition and heightened emotions.

### ***Developing Online Relationships***

Because teens are going through changes in body, emotion and identity, many feel isolated and confused, believing that "no one understands me." As a result, they may actively seek out many social relationships in an attempt to win approval from others. Teens are also at a stage when they're learning how to develop intimate, sometimes sexual relationships. Communicating with another person online may create a deep emotional connection -- even if the relationship never manifests itself in real life. Teens may feel a rush of excitement exploring how to come across as cool and attractive using online media. Through text messaging, chat and social networking, teens can explore the complexity of relationship dynamics.

### ***Identity Play***

The Internet allows people to change, invent and experiment with their identity. According to MIT professor Sherry Turkle, who interviewed people about their online behavior, identity play is considered a normal and even a healthy part of online communication. This could mean pretending you are a different age, gender or ethnicity, or changing any other aspect of your identity. People play with identity, for example, in chat rooms, in online videogames, with avatars and on their social networking profiles. They present different "selves" that serve various functions in different contexts. For instance, how you present yourself on MySpace is different from how you present yourself on the school's blog, versus how you post comments on a site for teen activists, versus how you respond to a post about what the best pizza place is in your community.

Presenting identity in different ways, along with the anonymous nature of the Internet, allows people to easily pretend that they're someone different. So, unless you know a person in real life, you never really know who you're talking to. And even if you do know someone in real life, it is possible that they are messing around with who they are, and it is also possible that someone else could be pretending to be that person.

### ***Anonymity***

On the one hand, anonymity -- having no known name or identity -- can influence people online to fabricate stories, say things they wouldn't say face to face, spread rumors, or, with one easy click, forward conversations others might have thought to be private. On the other hand, anonymity makes some people feel they can be their true selves. Some teens say they can be more authentic and real online than offline. They feel they can show who they really are and express how they really feel. Some people feel less judged when they are online, because in face-to-face relationships, people make assumptions based on how you look and behave and what you wear. Consequently, anonymity can be both a positive and negative aspect of online communication.

## **Disinhibition**

When people are online, they loosen up, feel less inhibited and are able to express themselves more freely than through other types of communication. They don't feel the same kinds of social pressures that lead people to conform to various social norms (like politeness) that are common in face-to-face social relationships. John Suler, a psychology professor at Rider University, calls this the Online Disinhibition Effect (ODE). Based on psychological theory, ODE is a phenomenon where people behave with less restraint online than offline. Six components work together to create ODE. For some people, one component may be stronger than another. The factors are:

1. *You Don't Know Me*: It's difficult to tell who someone really is.
2. *You Can't See Me*: People are "invisible" online; they can lurk or move from page to page without others knowing they're there.
3. *See You Later*: Some online communication is asynchronous (it doesn't always happen in real time). In e-mail and message boards there are delays in feedback, which can open people up to express themselves with disinhibition since they know they won't have to deal with instant feedback from others.
4. *It's All in My Head*: Because online communication is missing nonverbal cues that you would see in face-to-face communication, we create the voice, tone, personality and image of another person based on what he or she writes (and maybe through photos or videos). Our imaginations can get carried away with who other people "are" and what they mean. We might jump to conclusions and treat them differently than we would if we were in a face-to-face situation.
5. *It's Just a Game*: Some people see their online life as a kind of game with different rules than in real life. This can happen through the portrayal of identity, communication with others or through role-playing games.
6. *We're Equals*: Because everyone on the Internet has an equal opportunity to share his or her voice and participate, everyone seems to start on the same playing field. In real life, people adhere to different norms of conformity to authority and restrain their behavior to fit these norms. However, in online life, the concept of "authority" is diminished so that people are more willing to misbehave.

These psychological factors work together to contribute to people's feelings of disinhibition online.

## **Heightened Emotions**

Identity play, anonymity and the Online Disinhibition Effect can influence people to either:

- Create a positive and safe online environment by sharing emotions and beliefs more truthfully. People can engage in dialogue with others, learn new things, and gain new understanding of the world.
- Create an unsafe, uncivil and potentially threatening environment. It is easier for people to insult others, spread rumors and lies, and share private information that can be hurtful to other people (and even themselves).

In either case, people's emotions can be heightened. People may feel very strongly about their online relationships with others and take seriously what others say to them. Unfortunately, Ryan Halligan was a victim of harmful behavior -- online and offline -- that affected his emotional state. As Ryan's father, John Halligan, said: "The computer and the Internet were not the cause of my son's suicide, but they helped. I believe they helped amplify and accelerate the hurt and pain that he was trying to deal with."

## Discussion Questions

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1. Research has shown that even though most people think there are "telltale" signs of lying, most people cannot tell when they're being lied to, even from trusted family and friends. How can you tell if someone is lying to you online? Are there ways to tell if someone is not who they say they are?
2. Which of the six components of ODE do you find most interesting? Why? Describe an example to illustrate it.
3. How can you tell if someone is your "true friend" online?
4. Tim O'Reilly, the person who is credited with coining the term "Web 2.0," urges bloggers to use a code of conduct for online communication. Do you think bloggers -- or, more broadly, anyone who communicates online -- should follow a code of conduct? What five elements would you include? Can a code of conduct be practiced without impinging on the First Amendment?

### **Take Action!**

#### **Make a Cyberbullying PSA**

A PSA -- short for "public service announcement" -- is a media message that addresses a social problem, tries to create awareness about it, and urges people to take action. Search for some PSAs online that address the issue of cyberbullying. Then design your own PSA poster or graphic about cyberbullying. First, choose a target audience; for example, kids your age, kids younger than you, boys or girls. Second, design the PSA: How do you want it to look, and what do you want it to say? How will you get the audience's attention? How will you create awareness about cyberbullying? What will you urge viewers to do? Finally, spread the word by posting your message in a place where your target audience will see it. (This activity can be expanded by designing a video or audio PSA, or even coming up with an entire PSA campaign.)

### **Take Action!**

#### **Cyberbullying Tips -- For Kids and Teens**

Go online and search for information on ways that kids and teens who are confronted with cyberbullying can deal with it. Compile a good list of several different tips, being sure to keep track of where you get the information. Look through the list and decide which tips work better for kids and which work better for teens, then start two different lists. Call one something like "Dealing with Cyberbullying: Tips for Kids" and the other "Dealing with Cyberbullying: Tips for Teens." Show the list to a school administrator and suggest that it be posted on the school's Web site.

## Resources for Parents and Teens

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\* Those marked with an asterisk indicate sites with teen sections.

### **Parenting Teens Online**

**[www.parentingteensonline.com](http://www.parentingteensonline.com)**

Developed by a team of parents whose mission is to provide advice for the issues impacting parents and teens in a "straight-talk" manner, the site provides information on current issues facing teens and suggestions for how parents can deal with them. There is a special section on "Technology and Media," and parents can sign up for a weekly e-mail newsletter.

### **\*Staysafe**

**[www.staysafe.org](http://www.staysafe.org)**

Staysafe provides teens, parents, people over 50 and educators with information about the positive aspects of the Internet, and also about how to manage safety and security. It offers a virtual community and educational games. In addition to addressing behavioral changes, the site offers products and technical solutions to consumers.

### **\*Common Sense Media**

**[www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)**

Common Sense Media is a resource for parents, educators and media advocates dedicated to improving media and entertainment for kids. It offers a review section for movies, TV, games, books, music and Web sites. Reviews are written by Common Sense reviewers, parents and kids, and include ratings indicating objectionable content and educational value. Users can submit an online review.

### **\*i-SAFE**

**[www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)**

A worldwide leader in Internet safety education, i-SAFE considers its mission empowering youth and adults to take charge of their own Internet experience in safe and responsible ways. I-SAFE combines education and outreach so that participants can become i-certified after finishing the online learning modules.

### **bNetS@vvy**

**[www.bnetsavvy.com](http://www.bnetsavvy.com)**

bNetS@vvy is a bimonthly e-newsletter offering parents, guardians, and teachers tools to help kids ages 9 to 14 stay safer online.

## Safe Social Networking for Tweens and Teens

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### **Imbee**

**[www.imbee.com](http://www.imbee.com)**

Imbee is a parent-approved free social networking and blogging site designed for kids ages 8-14. Kids can participate in fan communities, trade cards, browse music and videos, blog and chat with others. Parents are able to see their children's online activity. Parents, teachers and kids use Imbee as a kid-friendly and safe social networking destination.

### **Whyville**

**[www.whyville.net](http://www.whyville.net)**

Whyville is a free virtual, game-like world where youth around the world chat, play and learn in a safe atmosphere. Visitors can learn how to manage money and run their own business, or participate in other activities that promote social responsibility. Users must earn a "chat license" before they can chat with other Whyville users, and several features are put into place to ensure chat safety.

### **Orb28 and LunaVida**

**[www.orb28.com](http://www.orb28.com), [www.lunavida.net](http://www.lunavida.net)**

Created by *New Moon* magazine -- the magazine created by girls for girls -- Orb28 and LunaVida are sites for girls to share their voices through poetry, stories and advice, and to chat safely with other girls. LunaVida is for girls ages 8-12, and Orb28 is for girls ages 13-15. Both sites are subscription based and advertising free.

## **Reading for Parents and Educators**

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***The Other Parent: The Inside Story of the Media's Effect on Our Children***, by James Steyer, 2003, Atria Books.

Jim Steyer, founder of Common Sense Media, explains how the media can negatively influence kids' lives, focusing on how many media companies that target kids lack social responsibility. Steyer provides concrete strategies for changes that can help parents, the media industry, government and concerned citizens.

***It's Not the Media: The Truth About Pop Culture's Influence on Children***, by Karen Sternheimer, 2003, Westview Press.

This book challenges the conventional wisdom that media is at the root of the social problems of youth. It makes the argument that media and popular culture are an easier scapegoat than deeper-rooted, more complex economic, social and political changes. Providing evidence from historical and societal trends and social science research, Sternheimer argues that fear of youth culture and social change is at the core of our fears about media's influence on children.

***Totally Wired: What Teens and Tweens Are Really Doing Online***, by Anastasia Goodstein, 2007, St. Martin's Press.

This book explores what teens are doing online, covering issues such as social networking, online journaling, artistic media production and cyberbullying. Weaving in stories from her own childhood and including interviews with industry professionals, Goodstein helps parents understand the benefits and drawbacks of kids' online activities and provides suggestions for realistic boundaries to keep kids safe.

## **Reading for Teens**

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***Feed***, by M.T. Anderson, 2002, Mirimax Books (fiction)

What would it be like to be connected to the Internet all the time? *Feed*, the story of a teenage boy and his relationship with a troubled girl, provides a dystopian vision of a future in which technology and telecommunications have merged with the human mind.

***The Wiz Biz***, by Rick Cook, 1997, Baen (fiction)

Silicon Valley programmer Walter Irving "Wiz" Zumwalt is seized from Earth and transported into a world of magic. When he must combat the Dark League, he learns that magic is like computer programming. This fantasy combines themes of sorcery and technology with plenty of inside jokes about programming and computers.

***Game Programming for Teens***, 2003, by Maneesh Sethi, Muska & Lipman (nonfiction)

For the teen interested in game programming, this book for beginners teaches everything one needs to know about how to create a complete game with graphics, animation, sound and music.

***Digital Filmmaking for Teens***, by Pete Shaner and Gerald Everett Jones, 2004, Muska & Lipman (nonfiction)

Teens learn Hollywood-style moviemaking techniques in a step-by-step format -- from developing an idea to scriptwriting, production, shooting and editing. Included is a DVD with advice, instructional videos and examples of youth-produced videos.

## **Adolescent Creativity Unleashed**

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What are teens doing online? Many of them are expressing themselves through original creations. Teens share their voices through profiles, blogging, poetry, music, parody, videos and photography and by creating mashups, remixes and machinima. Want to get involved? Check out these examples of teens using their creative skills to share their voices, engage with the community and promote civic engagement.

### **ListenUp!**

**[www.listenup.org](http://www.listenup.org)**

ListenUp! provides young video producers and their allies with support, a network of resources and projects that share young people's voices and creativity. Visitors can learn about current youth media projects around the globe, watch youth videos online, learn about film festivals and funding, access educator guides, and learn how to get involved.

### **Teen Ink**

**[www.teenink.com](http://www.teenink.com)**

*Teen Ink* is a magazine, book series and Web site devoted to writing and art by teenagers. Teens submit their creative work and opinions about the issues that affect their lives, including works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, reviews, opinions, artwork, photos, videos and sports. Led by the Young Authors Foundation, *Teen Ink* helps youth develop reading, writing, creative and critical thinking skills.

### **YouthNoise**

**[www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com)**

YouthNoise is a social networking site for people under 27 years old who "like to connect based on deeper interests than Paris Hilton's wardrobe, and want to get engaged with a cause." Visitors can find a social cause they're interested in, create a profile, search for friends, and find ways to get involved in creating change.