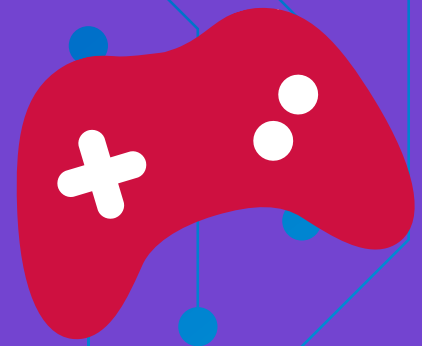




KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE & SECURE ONLINE

Information for Parents, Educators, and Caregivers



A resource provided by the
U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts



EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN ONLINE IS **INCREASING RAPIDLY**

In 2025 there were...

21.3 MILLION

reports of suspected
child sexual exploitation

1.4 MILLION

reports of online
enticement/sextortion

1.5 MILLION

reports involving
AI-generated exploitation

156% increase

WHAT KIDS ARE EXPERIENCING ONLINE



Early exposure to explicit content (often before age 12)



Requests for nude photos or personal information



Contact from strangers posing as non-threatening “friends”



Pressure to engage in sexual conversations or meet in person



Many interactions start off as online “friends” – then escalate

WE SURVEYED A MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL...

Has anyone ever asked you to do something online that you did not want to do?

Elementary Schoolers

Disclose age and gender
Share phone number
Share home address
Go on a date
Send nude photos

Middle Schoolers

Send nude photos
Meet up in person
Sexual role play

! This is what they told us 🙌

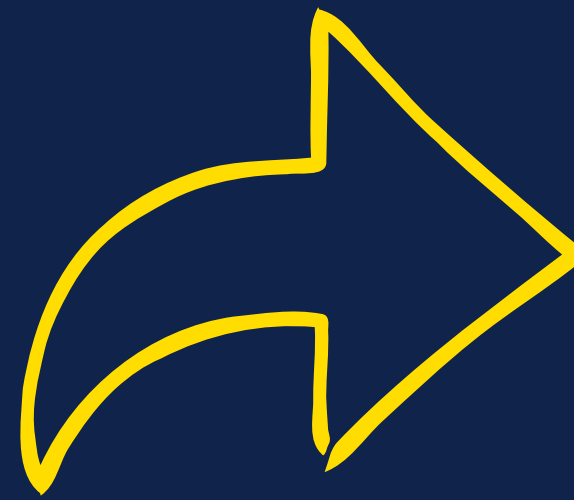
HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?



Connecting
with friends –
and strangers



Downloading
apps and joining
new platforms

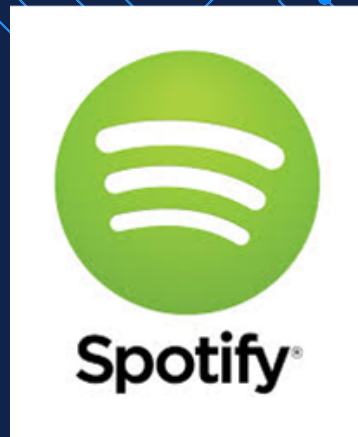


Sharing photos,
videos, and
personal details



Building digital
identity earlier
and earlier

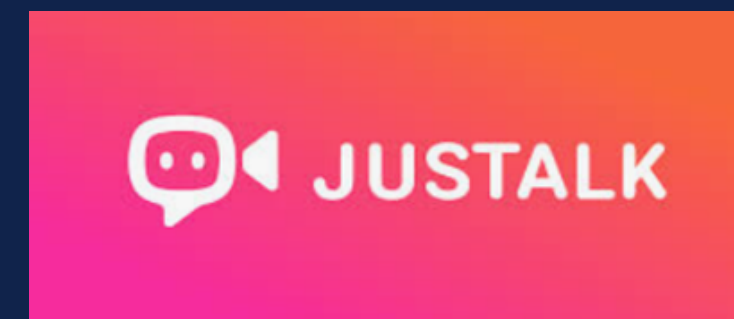
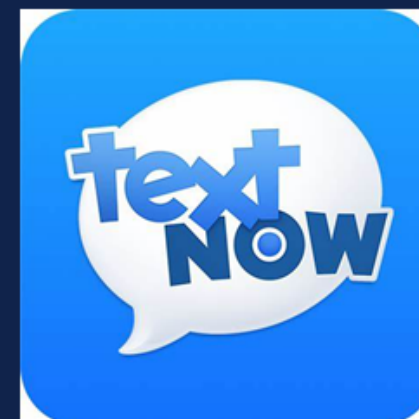
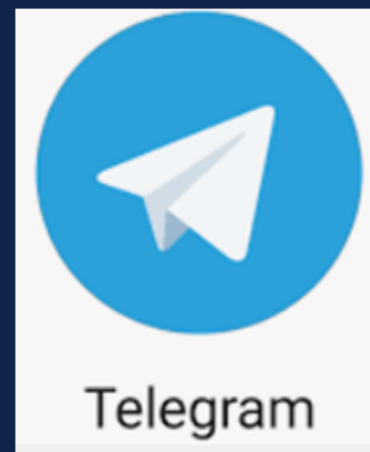
PLATFORMS ARE USED EVERY DAY BY KIDS AND **BY PREDATORS**



snapchat



Signal



Almost all the apps shown here have been used in federally-prosecuted child exploitation cases in Massachusetts.



IF THEY CAN ACCESS YOU, THEY CAN **STUDY YOU**

What kids often think... ×

*It's just online,
not real life*

*Everyone else has
public profiles*

*We have mutuals;
play the same game*

*My data's
already out there*

Strangers can learn about you
quickly through your online info

Likes, replies, and shared interests can
feel familiar without being known

**ONLINE ACCESS IS
REAL-WORLD RISK**

KEY RISK FACTOR: **DIGITAL FOOTPRINT**

A “digital footprint” is **anything shared online**

- Messages; Posts; Comments; Photos
- Likes; Followings; Interests
- Location Data
- Tags; Content Shared by Others



Anything posted online should be treated as potentially permanent, and **potentially public.**



HOW TO REDUCE RISK



- Set all online accounts to **private**
- **Limit personal information**
- Turn off **location sharing**
- Delete old profiles/accounts not in use
- Talk early. Talk often.

REMEMBER

- * Friendly online $\neq$ Safe
- * If it helps someone find you offline, then it stays offline.



IF SOMETHING HAPPENS: **ACT QUICKLY**



1

MAINTAIN EVIDENCE

Take screenshots

Save usernames + messages

Do **not** delete anything



2

TALK - UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED

How and when did this start?

What social media or gaming platform was used?

What was shared?

REMEMBER: THIS IS NOT THEIR FAULT

3

CONTACT LAW ENFORCEMENT

Follow their guidance before reporting to platforms

Report to CyberTipline by calling 1-800-843-5678

or visit www.cybertipline.org

For more information, visit:

www.justice.gov/usao-ma/project-safe-childhood/project-safe-childhood-resources

