



Twitch is a live streaming video platform owned by Twitch Interactive, a subsidiary of Amazon. The site primarily focuses on video game live streaming, including broadcasts of eSports competitions, in addition to music broadcasts, creative content, and more recently, "in real life" streams. Content on the site can be viewed either live or via video on demand.

What is Twitch?

The leading live streaming platform where people play games, make crafts, and showcase their day-to-day lives, attracts over two million broadcasters every month. The number grows each year, thanks in part to how easy it has become to live stream, and platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube also increasingly encourage people to share and watch live stories. With the push of a button on your game console or phone, you can share whatever you're doing at that exact moment with friends and strangers alike. The rise of popular (and profitable) influencers on platforms like YouTube and Twitch has also made the idea of being an online influencer aspirational. Some parents note that their children pretend to unbox toys to a nonexistent audience, and teachers report that their students often say they want to pursue YouTubing as a career.

If live streaming is a practice, the person behind the camera is the product. While there are things you can practice and improve, your popularity as a streamer comes down to whether or not people like you or find you interesting.

Challenges

Live streaming can be a fun activity, but not being able to edit your content at a later stage poses challenges. Whatever you say is out there for good, and users should be conscientious of the dialogue they use.

Choosing just to stream the game is the safest possible option available, adding in live video streaming of yourself can open up challenges with accidental leaking of personal information. It allows anyone and everyone to see what you look like and your personal environment. Be wary of accidentally leaving personally revealing objects in frame (i.e. a school uniform, or a letter with an address). Ensure that you have conversations with your young person about potential risks involved, such as stranger contact, potential bullying or their information being taken advantage before letting them livestream.

Sexualised Content

There is a prevalent subculture of sexual and lewd behaviour popular thanks to the ability to send monetary donations to streamers. Users have found other ways around the new clothing guidelines, wearing revealing attire, or acting salaciously.

Chat Rooms & Private Messages

Twitch allows its viewers to join in on the conversation with chat rooms. Many Twitch channels are known for their offensive humour and thousands take the opportunity to spew racist bigotry, insults, and other hate speech.

Twitch have released an 'AutoMod' feature which can be enabled on channels to block certain offensive words before they are published, although there are ways around such features, such as deliberately misspelling banned terms.

There is also a 'Whisper' feature, which allows you to talk privately with other users. This allows people to share messages in secret to members of a channel or chat room, which could allow for cyberbullying, grooming or other malicious activity.

What can parents do to keep their kids safe?

We always advocate for communication first. Discussing these issues with your child is the best way to reach a mutual understanding about what is and isn't okay in your family or community.

If you don't want to restrict Twitch in your home, there are some steps you can take to minimise the risks.

- *Ensure you know what channels your child is subscribing and watch a snippet of their content.*
- *Immediately block any strangers that try to send personal messages, or ask your child for any information on themselves.*
- *Don't let preteens watch Twitch content unsupervised.*

App Fact Sheets available from
the Carly Ryan Foundation. Please email:
info@carlyryanfoundation.com