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*YouTube: The Essential
Facts for Parents*



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YouTube Facts



300 HOURS OF VIDEO ARE
UPLOADED TO YOUTUBE EVERY MINUTE!



ALMOST **5 BILLION VIDEOS** ARE VIEWED
ON YOUTUBE EVERY SINGLE DAY.



YOUTUBE GETS OVER **30 MILLION** VISITORS PER DAY.



SOME VIDEOS THAT KIDS ARE WATCHING HAVE BEEN
VIEWED **BILLIONS** OF TIMES. LIKE THIS **ONE**.

YouTube Kids was downloaded more than 10 million times in its first year (2015).

The first YouTube video was uploaded on 23 April 2005. **Me at the Zoo** shows co-founder Jawed Karim at the San Diego Zoo.

The YouTube platform has over **1.9 billion logged in monthly users**.

6 out of 10 people prefer online video platforms to live TV.

By 2025, it is estimated that **half of viewers under 32** will not subscribe to a pay-TV service.

YouTube vs YouTube Kids

YouTube Kids is an app that's a stripped-down version of the original video blogging site, with videos filtered by the target audience's age. As a mobile app, kids can tap their way across a digital ecosystem populated by countless videos—all conceived with them in mind. The videos that surface on the app are generated by YouTube's recommendation algorithm, which considers the viewer's Google search history, YouTube viewing history, and other data.

YouTube Kids also offers features like a timer setting and a search function, giving users access to YouTube's main database of videos, but filters the results so that your children can only access safe content. The service also provides adults with a range of parental controls, including the ability to disable search completely, limit screen time, and cap the volume.



Appeal of YouTube

Kids love YouTube because it:

// Caters for their **THREE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS**- the need for connection, competency and control.

// They get lots of **ADRENALINE** and there's **ANTICIPATION** about what they'll find on YouTube (much more unpredictable and less linear content than traditional TV viewing).

// YouTube caters for their **BRAIN'S DESIRE FOR NOVELTY**. YouTube is always new, interesting, rewarding and requires minimal mental effort. YouTube channels don't follow strict program schedules so the content can pop up at any time (hence, why notifications work to keep kids hooked).

// YouTube gives them a **SENSE OF CONTROL**- as they choose what they watch. Kids want a sense of agency.
// It's **EASY**- minimal cognitive effort is required.

// **CURATED AND PERSONALISED CONTENT** thanks to Google recommendation algorithms. The suggested videos are exactly what will appeal to your child's interests.









// YouTube is **SILLY AND PLAYFUL** (which appeals to kids)- this in turn releases serotonin and dopamine in the brain (which makes them want more).

// There's an element of **RISK AND CHANCE**- they're unsure what they'll view next as much of the content is made by amateurs.

// Kids have **UNDER-DEVELOPED IMPULSE-CONTROL SKILLS**- this is especially the case when their brains are flooded with dopamine - it literally hijacks the logical part of their brain that would ordinarily control their impulses.

YouTube Risk

OVERVIEW

-  // **AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**- kids can see scary, violent, pornographic, racist, rude, sexual content on both YouTube and YouTube kids. Given the sheer volume of videos that are uploaded every minute to the platform it's impossible for each video to be vetted. So it's highly likely your child will encounter inappropriate content (as compared to TV streaming services like Net ix, ABC, Stan, Foxtel etc).
-  // **INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE**- in both the videos and comments underneath the videos.
-  // **GROOMING PLATFORM**- online predators know that children spend many hours on YouTube, often unsupervised, so they can start to build a rapport online on YouTube and then shift the conversation offline, or to another digital platform (e.g. Skype).
-  // **ADVERTISING**- YouTube is an advertising platform specifically targeting kids, where kids' content has been viewed. Advertising standards aren't mandated on video content uploaded to YouTube, so these often contain toy and junk food commercials and other age-inappropriate ads. Paid Ads follow YouTube's advertising policies. Children can watch videos free of paid ads if you use the YouTube Kids App with the YouTube Premium option.
-  // **DATA MINING**- Google is tracking everything that's done online. Your child's search history and keystrokes are being recorded and it's unclear, at this stage, where their information may end up. There are also mounting concerns that YouTube collects data from young users, in violation of the Children's Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) which prohibits data from being collected from kids under 13 years.
-  // **PRIVACY**- your kids may disclose personal or private information online if they're uploading videos (.e.g. their name, address, school etc).
-  // **LOW-QUALITY CONTENT**- this video has been viewed over 590 million times. The recommendation algorithm means once they've watched one type of poor-quality video, then chances are they'll be shown more.
-  // **AUTOPLAY FEATURE TRIGGERS THE 'STATE OF INSUFFICIENCY'**- i.e. kids never feel 'done' when watching YouTube. The autoplay feature promotes binge-watching.

YouTube Benefits

// **ACCESSING EDUCATIONAL CONTENT**- kids can access documentaries, interviews and videos of important historical events and natural disasters, broadening their knowledge. They can watch educational videos where abstract or difficult concepts can be explained.

// **LEARN NEW SKILLS**- kids can learn a new language, refine sports skills, learn an instrument watching YouTube clips.

// **SHARING IDEAS WITH AN AUDIENCE**- if kids upload their own content they have to develop their ideas, rehearse and refine their verbal communication, problem solve and use a range of other higher-order thinking skills.

// **INTERACTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AS OPPOSED TO PASSIVE VIEWING OF VIDEOS**, when kids start and manage their own channel (i.e. upload content).



Keeping Kids Healthy & Safe On YouTube

// **PLAN, DON'T BAN YOUTUBE**- banning YouTube makes it the forbidden fruit and they'll access it in other places, as you'll drive the behaviour underground.

// **SHOW AN ACTIVE INTEREST**- ...even if you have to fake it! Grin and bear it and stay engaged. It stops YouTube from becoming the forbidden fruit.

// **KEEP UP-TO-DATE**- go to the homepage of YouTube and look at what's trending so you know what content they might be likely to be viewing. Kids discover new videos from their friends or by clicking on the related videos (which may or may not be appropriate). You can also go to YouTube Spotlight for **curated content** in a variety of categories.

// **KEEP DEVICES IN PUBLIC AREAS AT HOME**- keep devices out of bedrooms (& bathrooms). Your child is much more unlikely to be watching inappropriate videos sitting next to you on the lounge!

// **USE YOUTUBE KIDS**- for kids under 13 years, it is strongly recommended that YouTube Kids is used. It's certainly not 'perfect' or completely 'safe' (remember, videos on YouTube Kids showed the Momo challenge). The YouTube Kids app offers screentime limits and restricted search options too. Remember, these aren't 100% failsafe.

// **DIGITAL WELLBEING TOOLS**- The YouTube app also offers **some settings** that remind you to take a break and restrict your time on YouTube.

// **ASK THEM QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE WATCHING**- it shows that you're interest (even if you aren't, fake your interest) and it prevents it from becoming the perceived forbidden fruit. Ask questions about the hosts your kids like, what subjects they address, and most importantly, what these topics mean to your kids.

// **INSTALL INTERNET-FILTERING TOOLS**- I personally use and recommend **The Family Zone**. You can use 'Restricted Mode' to limit what kids are seeing in YouTube.

// **CHECK WHO THEY'RE SUBSCRIBING TO**- this will give you some insight into what they may have viewed.

// **SET UP PARENTAL CONTROLS**- Use 'Restricted Mode' to limit their exposure to inappropriate content. Go to your account settings page-> select the Restricted Mode at the bottom of the page. (It will remain on for logged-in users on the same browser.)

// **SET UP A FAMILY ACCOUNT**- with a shared Google account. This will enable you to see what they've viewed and uploaded and what they're sharing.

// **TURN ON SAFETY MODE**- remember, this limits some, but not all unsafe/iffy content. This is NOT a 100% fail safe strategy. To access, scroll to the bottom of the page, under the safety box select 'on'.

// **SUBSCRIBE TO SPECIFIC CHANNELS**- they'll get notified when new content is uploaded. Use Common Sense Media's **reviews of YouTube channels** to find suitable content.

// **CREATE PLAYLISTS**- kids can create your own playlists or watch playlists already created by favourite YouTubers. When they watch playlists, the Up Next videos that display are the ones in the list (so in this case, it's OK to keep Autoplay enabled). Other related content will display, but lower on the page.

// **TURN OFF AUTO-PLAY**- this will help to prevent the 'state of insufficiency' and will stop your child from encountering inappropriate videos that are based on recommendation algorithms.

// Teach them **CRITICAL LITERACY SKILLS**- to help them evaluate the advertising that bombards them on YouTube. Remember, kids under 6 years of age generally lack a meta-awareness of advertising and cannot critically reflect on their reactions.

// **UPLOAD PRIVATELY**- if your child is uploading their own videos, select either 'private' (only people you choose can view the video) or 'unlisted' (only people with the link can view the video).

// **DISABLE COMMENTS**- this reduces the chance of inappropriate or offensive comments (select 'advanced settings tab' in upload screen). You can select to either completely disable comments or only allow comments that are approved.

YouTube Channel Tips

If your child has set up their own YouTube channel there are some simple steps to keep them safe:

// **UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITY GUIDELINES**- ensure that your child understands the YouTube 'rules'. They cannot upload copyrighted material, violent or pornographic or threatening material.

// **ADJUST PRIVACY SETTINGS**- set videos to either 'private' so only seen by selected users or 'unlisted' so can only be seen by people with the link.

// **MODERATE COMMENTS**- trash, approve or flag comments that are inappropriate.

// **BLOCK AND REPORT COMMENTS**- teach your children what to do if they read a comment that is rude or inappropriate. Have ongoing conversations about how to handle such comments.

