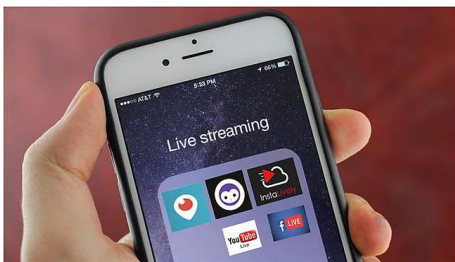


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Trends in Online Child Sexual Exploitation – International Watch Foundation



Recently published IWF research has found that children are being sexual abused online by offenders who coerce, groom or blackmail them. Although this is not a new phenomenon, the age of the children was particularly striking. Almost all the children abused in this way were under 13, nearly 30% were under 10. The children were in their own homes when this abuse took place, often in their bedroom or bathroom, using live streaming technology. In many cases, the children seemed to be unaware that recordings were being made of these live streams, which are then uploaded elsewhere. Whilst secondary schools are often alert to these dangers, many primary schools will be shocked to see the young age of many victims. Chief Executive, Susie Hargaves, said, 'We know that this information will be terrifying for most parents. That's why we are trying to warn parents, carers and professionals working with children, about the potential abuse of live steaming technology by offenders.'



These are not platforms with which children should engage unsupervised – parents should **supervise the use of such platforms** for younger children. This doesn't mean they have to be "on camera", but they should be in the same location. Even for older (teenage) children, it is worth **being aware of who they are streaming to**, and why they are doing so. Doing stupid things for "likes" is one thing, being coerced into harmful behaviours is something different and we need to be making young people aware that just because they are asked to do something, that doesn't mean they have to do it!