



## GENERATION INTERNET IS GETTING YOUNGER

***One in six under 3s are now active online, Parents seek better online protection for children***

As many as one in six children begin their online lives at the age of 3 or under, and over a quarter (28%) are using the Internet before they are of school age, a new report reveals.

[AgeChecked](#), a developer of age verification software, carried out the research\* for its '[Generation Internet](#)' report, which looks at how the Internet is reinventing childhood.

With a growing number of children going online before they can read or write, the authors of the report highlight the need for the owners of websites to support parents in protecting their children.

Alastair Graham, CEO of AgeChecked comments: "The online experience is reinventing childhood. Anything can be Googled by children today and many will learn how to access the Internet before they even enter pre-school.

"This is putting pressure on parents to guide their kids' first steps online, teaching good online habits and ensuring that positive benefits outweigh any negative aspects.

"This also highlights the need for the owners of websites and online services to consider how they can best support parents, putting in place age filters that prevent children accessing inappropriate content and services."

The majority of parents said that they were concerned about children gaining access to social media (71%) and video sharing sites (70%). Concern about such sites is almost as high as that for sites containing pornographic material (75%).



Game sites which may contain content aimed at older children or adults, as well as expensive downloads, (such as those for Xbox or PlayStation) are also a significant cause for concern (51% of parents), as are sites streaming films or TV content (46%) and retail sites selling age restricted goods (40%) such as e-cigarettes, knives or solvents.

Alastair continues, "The Internet is seen as a potential minefield by parents and whatever support site owners can give to prevent children seeing or buying what they shouldn't would be welcomed.

"The government is currently pushing ahead with age verification protections for pornographic sites, but clearly parents have a much broader set of online content and services that cause them concern."

The report also reveals that, at the other end of the scale, some parents are responding to online concerns by denying Internet access until children are older. 20% of children are not allowed to go online until they are ten years of age or older.

Alastair adds: "The cautious approach to restrict all access to the Internet adopted by some parents has a drawback of keeping children away from the educational opportunities the Internet provides. These parents may feel more comfortable allowing their children limited access to the Net, if there were better safety measures in place on the websites they visit."

### ***CASE STUDY AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW***

Anne Arnold from South Manchester is a Mum of two children under the age of three. She said: "My son Joe is 2 and a half and he has grown up playing with our iPads, phones and laptop. He's a true digital native and has never known a world without the Internet. I think this is great for his development and education and he's always supervised while using the Internet at the moment, but I do worry about when he's of an age to have his own devices in his own space.



“I’m sure it won’t be long before he’s more savvy than I am about accessing content online, so I really want to be reassured that in future he’s going to be safe using the Internet. Joe’s childhood is going to be completely different than mine which brings a lot of new concerns for parents today. I do think website owners have a responsibility to use to use the latest technology to make sure young people are protected online from communicating with people they don’t know, buying dangerous products and accessing inappropriate content.”

For more information please visit: <http://agechecked.com> or [download the full report](#)

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**Notes to editors:**

\* Online survey of 1,500 households conducted in June 2016